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John Chrysostom's "On Providence": A translation and theological interpretation

Hall, Christopher Alan, Ph.D.

Drew University, 1991

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JOHN CHRYSOSTOM'S *ON PROVIDENCE*: A TRANSLATION AND THEOLOGICAL INTERPRETATION

A dissertation submitted to the Graduate School of
Drew University in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the degree,
Doctor of Philosophy

Christopher Alan Hall
Drew University
Madison, New Jersey
May 1991

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These pages are dedicated to my wife,

DEBBIE,

my best friend.

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Many thanks to my dissertation committee of Dr. Thomas C. Oden, Dr. James Pain, and Dr. Robert Bull. I would especially like to thank Dr. Oden for his assistance on the project, and for much appreciated advice and help during my time at Drew.

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ABBREVIATIONS

ACW	*Ancient Christian Writers*
ANF	*Ante-Nicene Fathers*
FC	*Fathers of the Church*
NPNF	*Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*
PG	*Patrologiae Cursus Completus, series Graeca* (Migne)
PL	*Patrologiae Cursus Completus, series Latina* (Migne)
SCh	*Sources chrétiennes*
CCL	*Corpus Christianorum Latinorum*

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Introduction

Is God truly in control of human history? People living in the late twentieth century might surely have their doubts. Both the theologian and lay person continue to ponder, and at times struggle mightily with the question of God's goodness and omnipotence as manifested in providence and the reality of evil and suffering in this world. Modern horrors such as the Jewish Holocaust, the Armenian genocide, or the more recent massacre in Cambodia silence any flippant responses.

Each one of us has at one time or another asked the question "Why?" Whether it be an accident, sickness, or natural disaster, the question wells up within us -- Why? Why didn't God intervene? Has this tragedy occurred because of our sin? We had always thought God was all-powerful. Were we wrong? Was God unable to control circumstances? Are events really out of control? Or should we question God's goodness? Perhaps God could have intervened but chose not to do so. But why would he act this way? Does God like to see us suffer? Perhaps he does possess infinite power, but with less than infinite mercy. Exactly who are we dealing with here?

Questions such as these readily spring to mind when the sharp blade of suffering cuts suddenly into our lives. Are answers available? More particularly, how can John

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Chrysostom, archbishop of Constantinople in the late fourth century, help us in our quest to make sense out of events and circumstances that seem to defy all categories of why and wherefore? He lived so long ago. How could he begin to understand our present modern situation? Can a person living near the year 2000 A.D. expect to find viable answers in the writings of a man who lived 1600 years ago?

Surprisingly enough, the very fact that Chrysostom lived so long ago might serve to our advantage. Because Chrysostom is writing in an age different from our own he might well possess insights modern assumptions have too quickly overlooked. In this essay we will need to examine what modern assumptions might blind us to possible solutions to the questions posed by divine providence and human suffering. What are the modern blind spots that need to be exposed to the light of ancient wisdom? The Patristic writers belonged to an important intellectual and spiritual tradition and wrestled with many of the same questions theologians and philosophers face today. To see these questions debated in a different intellectual and historical setting is edifying, for it enables us to step outside our own culturally-conditioned presuppositions and see the issues in a clearer light.[1]

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1 Cf. Francis Young, "Patristics", *A New Dictionary of Christian Theology,* ed. Alan Richardson and John Bowden, (London: SCM Press Ltd., 1983), 431-435.

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This is not to say that there is not important hermeneutical bridge building to be done. We do live in a different time and place than Chrysostom, and the intervening history between our time and his will color our perspective and our ability to hear what he has to say. We will easily misinterpret his words if we fail to take account of significant differences in language, culture, history, philosophy, and theology. Robert Wilken makes this point in the introduction to his study of Chrysostom's response to the Jews:

> The Christian Church had to contend with rivals and to defend itself against informed and skillful critics. It cannot be overemphasized that the fourth century was not medieval Europe and that the cultural and social traditions of the cities of the Roman world were not only independent of Christianity, but often innocent of Christian influence.[2]

Wilken argues that Chrysostom's polemic against the Jews is misunderstood when read anachronistically against the backdrop of modern antisemitism and its attendant horrors. The same could be said of the error of expecting Chrysostom to address all the questions a modern person might pose concerning providence and suffering or to answer them in a manner one feels is appropriate or enlightened or "politically correct."

Chrysostom and others inhabiting the world of early

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[2] Robert L. Wilken, *John Chrysostom and the Jews: Rhetoric and Reality in the Late 4th Century,* (Berkeley, Los Angeles: University of California Press: 1983), xvii.

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Christianity were well acquainted with injustice, sickness, brutality, and murder. It was no easier then to watch a child die of a crippling illness, nor to see one's village ravaged by a sudden incursion of military power, whether that of the Romans or the "barbarians." Soldiers were no more gentle at that time than they are today. Chrysostom experienced firsthand the taste of fear, the experience of betrayal, hopes smashed, willful misinterpretation and prejudice, unfair and illegal court proceedings and judgment, and finally died alone in exile, far from the church he had loved and served. Whatever thoughts he has to offer his reader concerning the question of God's providence and human suffering had been tried in the fire of his own experience. He is not writing from the comfort of the philosopher's easy chair.

Chrysostom's presuppositions about God's character, the incarnation of Jesus Christ, present history as an in-between time, eschatological hope for the future, and the incomprehensibility of many of God's actions in his world would all have been familiar terrain to other church fathers and mothers, though his ideas might well appear foreign unmapped territory to modern minds and sensibilities. For example, modern theodicies frequently mention the difficulty of reconciling divine providence and human suffering. In the age of Auschwitz, how can one maintain credible belief

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in an omnipotent and loving God?[3] How can we plausibly affirm God's governance of world events if such horrors occur?

Patristic teaching recognizes the difficulty of reconciling divine providence and human suffering, but considers the questions and complexities posed by these realities to be neither insurmountable nor incompatible. James Walsh and P.G. Walsh comment:

> It would be a fair summary of the patristic teaching on divine providence and human suffering to say that none of the ancient Christian writers ever experienced more than a passing difficulty in accepting the two concepts as perfectly compatible with one another.[4]

Why would this be the case? Are James and P.G. Walsh correct when they assert that the Patristic world was less experienced with the harsh realities of life and thus offer

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3 Richard Rubenstein eloquently addresses this difficulty when he writes: "How can Jews believe in an omnipotent, beneficent God after Auschwitz? Traditional Jewish theology maintains that God is the ultimate, omnipotent actor in the historical drama. It has interpreted every major catastrophe in Jewish history as God's punishment of a sinful Israel. I fail to see how this position can be maintained without regarding Hitler and the SS as instruments of God's will. . . . To see any purpose in the death camps, the traditional believer is forced to regard the most demonic, anti-human explosion in all history as a meaningful expression of God's purpose. The idea is simply too obscene for me to accept." Richard L. Rubenstein, *After Auschwitz,* (New York: Bobbs-Merrill, 1966), 153, quoted in David McKenzie, "A Kantian Theodicy", Faith and Philosophy, Vol.1, No.2, April, 1984, 241.

4 James Walsh and P.G. Walsh, *Divine Providence and Human Suffering,* Message of the Fathers of the Church, Volume 17, (Wilmington: Michael Glazier, 1985), 11.

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solutions which call for correction and improvement?[5] Or are the perimeters of Chrysostom's thought broad enough to encompass present-day realities? Questions such as these can only be answered by taking a detailed look at the major themes Chrysostom covers in *On Providence.* An attentive examination of *On Providence*, however, must be coupled to a preliminary discussion of the assumptions that might prevent a modern person from effectively hearing Chrysostom's message. If a bridge is to be built between his age and ours, both his assumptions and those of the modern era must be recognized. It is to the assumptions of modernity that we now turn.

Thomas C. Oden of Drew University describes modernity as a period, a mindset, and a malaise:

> The *period* begins with the French Revolution in 1789. The *mindset* is that ethos reflected by an elitist intellectual class of "change agents" positioned in universities, the press, and in influential sectors of the liberal church.... The *malaise* of modernity is related to the rapidly deteriorating influence of these four central values between roughly 1955 and 1985.[6]

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[5] They write: "The Fathers had less experience of the incredible violence, genocide, exploitation, famine and the rest which are modern man's constant companions. . . .The traditional answers to the problem of evil which a perennial Christian humanism still offers seem to force us today to beseech our God to provide us with better ones, such as will help us truly to assuage human grief, particularly for the suffering of the innocent." Ibid., 17.

[6] Christopher A. Hall, "Back to the Fathers", Christianity Today, Volume 34, No. 13, 29.

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Oden traces the tenets of modernity to Enlightenment thought and culture and aptly summarizes its mindset in four key assumptions about the nature of reality: 1. *Moral relativism* -- what is right is dictated by culture, social location, and situation. 2. *Autonomous individualism* -- moral authority comes essentially from within. 3. *Narcissistic hedonism* -- a focus on egocentric personal pleasure. 4. *Reductive naturalism* -- what is reliably known must be reduced to what one can see, hear, and empirically investigate.[7]

William J. Abraham reinforces Oden's analysis in a telling article in The Reformed Journal in which he delineates the effect of modernity's central values on the course of modern theology. He writes that "Any consensus in theology today begins with the rejection of the classical Christian tradition as this is generally known in Western culture."[8] Once the "canons of science" and "critical history" have been accepted as normative criteria, the idea of God intervening directly into history is simply no longer held to be believable. Abraham laments this turn of events and is correct in pointing out that once the scientific reductionist mode is accepted as valid the theologian has

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[7] Ibid., 29.

[8] William J. Abraham, "Oh God, Poor God -- the state of contemporary theology," The Reformed Journal, Volume 40, Issue 2, February 1990, 19.

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little choice but to "reinterpret the tradition in terms that will speak, as they say, 'meaningfully' to the modern age."[9]

Unless this assumption of modernity is recognized there is little hope that the modern reader will be able to hear or appreciate what Chrysostom has to say. For example, if Chrysostom's analysis and explanation of providence is framed by an understanding of the cross of Christ and the hope of Christ's return in the future, modern readers who are still operating under the assumptions of modernity will have already eliminated these factors as viable options in formulating an understanding of suffering.

Abraham goes on to describe other characteristics of the modern world view. A modern person is "one informed by the canons of rationality developed in the European Enlightenment." This individual can "no longer believe in miracles and special divine revelation," largely because the possibility of divine intervention in history is no longer a valid option.

When viewed from a sociological perspective, this person is secularized, "no longer shaped in any profound way by the institutions of Christianity but someone cut loose

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[9] Ibid., 19.

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and alone in a sea of individualism and autonomy."[10] Modern theology's response to modernity was "to baptize the values of the secular person as more Christian than those of the traditional believer and to seek to join the secular person in his or her quest for authenticity, community, peace, and justice."[11] The community of faith and the tradition it encompasses is deserted for the secular community with the result that modern theology "for the most part is the skillful reworking and expansion of the dregs of the Western political Enlightenment."[12]

It is extremely interesting to note that Abraham contends there is an alternative to modern theology's response to the present crisis. In many ways he echoes Chrysostom as he calls for a more cautious and humble stance on the part of the theologian. Theologians should be cautious about what they can achieve for two reasons. First, this caution "derives from a sense of inadequacy in the face of the utter complexity and mystery of the divine order." Modern theology suffers from a failure to "acknowledge the limitation of the human intellect in its attempts to unravel the mystery of God's action in the

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[10] Ibid., 20.

[11] Ibid., 20.

[12] Ibid., 21.

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world."

Secondly, "the reticence of theologians derives also in part from the place of Scripture, the classical creeds of the church, and the great hymnody and liturgies of the faithful in the life of Christian communities throughout the generations."[13] That is to say, responsible theology need not be compulsively creative or neurotically individualistic.[14] Abraham writes:

> A true and truly Christian theology will surely be deeply rooted in revelation and tradition, in worship and prayer in the Christian community, in compassion and service in the world, in fear and trembling before the wonder of the Christian gospel, and in humble dependence on the grace and agency of the Holy Spirit. Yet precisely these notes are the ones missing from the prevailing canons of theological discourse.[15]

Abraham concludes his article by pointing his reader back to the theological tradition and perspective that Chrysostom represents. He argues that it is "in the heart of the Eastern tradition" that the "notes are sounded" which are sadly missing from the modern Western theological symphony. Here we find a way of thinking about God that

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[13] Ibid., 22.

[14] In a biting comment Abraham writes: "....there is something ludicrous with the view common in American theological seminaries that each theological student must, in the space of a semester or so and after a short period of study, develop his or her own creed and shortly thereafter be licensed to inflict this creed on the church at large." Ibid., 23.

[15] Ibid., 23.

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specifically rejects the modern addiction to the new as the source of all legitimate truth. Might the East really have a constructive word to speak to the modern West? Abraham says yes. What, he asks, if the East is right and the modern West is wrong. Then the present malaise becomes comprehensible. Modern theology is in its present "grim state" because "it is built on foundations that were faulty from the outset." "On the one hand, it rests on a flawed assumption about the whole theological enterprise -- that is, on the rejection of revelation, worship, and tradition as the fundamental womb in which theology flourishes."[16]

Abraham asks how modern theology can make a valid plea for the gospel "to be applied to the horrors of the modern world" when the very gospel they wish to apply has been abandoned. On the other hand, the modern enterprise is also flawed by its unrealistic expectations, "chief among them the expectation that a new theologian will appear on the scene once every ten years or so." A more reasonable expectation "is that a true theologian might appear once every five hundred years or so."[17]

How then, might modern assumptions prove to be a road block for entrance into Chrysostom's thoughts in *On*

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[16] Ibid., 23.

[17] Ibid., 23.

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Providence? We have already mentioned that Chrysostom will employ God's entrance into history in Jesus Christ and the eschatological hope of his return as a primary paradigm for understanding how God governs human history. Modern readers will be asked to rethink a reductionist perspective that would ipso facto eliminate the possibility of God's intervention in Christ in history. For Chrysostom, the uniqueness of this event will also challenge the modern tendency to relativize religious claims to particularity. He will unapologetically insist that God's entrance into history in this particular individual at this particular time and place is the key for comprehending how God continues to govern his world.

Perhaps the modern reader will be struck even more by Chrysostom's frontal assault upon narcissistic hedonism and autonomous individualism. Why? Oden's definition of narcissistic hedonism will help to explain:

> It is....narcissistic hedonism that assumes that moral value is reducible to now feelings and sensory experience. It views human existence essentially as spiritless body, sex as orgasm, psychology as amoral data gathering, and politics as the manipulation of power. It systematically ignores the human capacity of self-transcendence, moral reasoning, covenant commitment, and self-sacrificial *agape*.[18]

Chrysostom will specifically argue that providence and suffering cannot be understood in terms of the "now." If

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[18] Thomas Oden, *After Modernity...What*, (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1990), 31.

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the "now" is all we have to go on, existence indeed will take on a bleak appearance. Nor is the pursuit of individual pleasure a primary value. In fact, Chrysostom contends that suffering can be a helpful medicine that God prescribes for our lives in order to cleanse out harmful impurities and bring us true joy.

Finally, Chrysostom will insist that the meaning of an individual life can only be understood within the broader outlook of God's purposes for his church and his kingdom. That is to say, at times God will allow an individual to suffer in order to advance the cause of the kingdom of God. This suffering, however, is always seen as redemptive and surrounded by God's love, care, and goodness. God's love for the individual is affirmed, but his or her fulfillment or gratification is both redefined and relocated. On earth there are tasks to be accomplished and battles to be won. Rewards are promised but delayed in coming. We are in an in-between time, and our understanding of God's action in this world must be framed by this hermeneutical stance.

Chrysostom invites us to lay our own assumptions on the shelf, at least temporarily, and to enter into a different way of thinking about the purpose and goal of human life. In *On Providence* he organizes his thoughts in six major themes, each of which entails its own set of assumptions, which will be examined in detail. These central themes can be classified in the following categories:

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1. The pivotal role of disposition in forming a proper hermeneutical stance for understanding God's providence.

2. The incomprehensibility of God's actions in the world and the implications of this incomprehensibility for what we can expect to know and understand.

3. Nature as a source of information and insight into God's providence.

4. The love and goodness of God as a fundamental presupposition for all God's actions, especially seen in the incarnation.

5. Eschatological hope and judgment as an essential element in an adequate understanding of providence and human suffering.

6. The present life as an opportunity for the formation of Christian character.

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The Pivotal Role of Disposition in the Formation of a Proper Hermeneutical Stance

In *On Providence,* Chrysostom writes of Abraham's willingness to sacrifice his son Isaac in obedience to God. For Chrysostom, Abraham's willingness to obey God is of the utmost significance. Chrysostom utilizes Abraham's obedient and receptive disposition before God's mysterious and troubling command as a fundamental element in his own analysis of the manner in which human understanding of providence increases and matures. He will insist that Abraham's understanding expands only as he adopts this humble stance before God's command.

In chapter ten of *On Providence* Chrysostom portrays the scene as God calls to Abraham to prevent the sacrifice of Isaac: "For the voice did not simply call to him: 'Abraham,' but 'Abraham, Abraham,' through the repetition of his name restraining and arresting his intention which was focused solely on the command, so complete was his absorption on the command."[19]

Chrysostom's point is that Abraham's intention, his προαίρεσις, was entirely concentrated on obeying God's

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[19] Chrysostom, *On Providence,* trans. Christopher A. Hall, 10: 18; cf. SCh., No. 79, *Sur La Providence de Dieu,* trans. Anne-Marie Malingrey, (Paris: Les Éditions du Cerf, 1961) 10: 18, 160, 162.

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command.[20] Although God's command appeared to be diametrically opposed to the promise made to Abraham and to the way a loving and good God would operate in the world, Abraham still was prepared to obey. Why? "He didn't meddle in God's affairs."[21]

How did Abraham reach the decision to obey God's command, even though it appeared to be so nonsensical? Much of what Chrysostom says in *On Providence* revolves around his understanding of how God works in human beings to produce the response demonstrated by Abraham. A number of significant themes intertwine in Chrysostom's explanation of how Abraham reached the decision to obey God's command, chief among which is his understanding of human disposition and its relationship to the action of the will. Key to our discussion of disposition will be Chrysostom's understanding of προαίρεσις, for although this particular word only occurs in *On Providence* one time, the theology underpinning its meaning is present throughout the work.

As we have seen in our introduction to *On Providence*,

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[20] προαίρεσις is an extremely rich word with an interesting constellation of meanings and nuances. Its first central definition refers to the human faculty of free choice. Its second main definition focuses on human intention, motive, and disposition. It is this aspect which is reflected in my translation of προαίρεσις as intention in this present instance. Both definitions need to be kept in mind as our discussion proceeds. Cf. G.W.H. Lampe, *A Patristic Greek Lexicon*, (Oxford: At the Clarendon Press, 1961), Vol. 2, 1133-1134.

[21] Ibid., 10: 18. cf. SCh., *Sur La Prov.*, 10: 18, 162.

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the question of the origin of evil and its nature is integrally related to the question of God's providence and human suffering. Chrysostom consistently denies that evil is the result of God's action. Nor is its source to be found in the nature of created matter or the human body as various gnostic groups postulated.[22] As we will see in our section on nature and providence, Chrysostom argues that God in Genesis has declared all of creation to be good, and the beauty and utility of creation also demonstrate its goodness.[23] Rather, the true source of evil is to be found in a perverted or disobedient choice or προαίρεσις. A closer look at the meaning of προαίρεσις and its relation to human disposition will facilitate our discussion.

The classical definition of προαίρεσις was the choice of one thing in preference to another. Aristotle, as Edward Nowak notes, defined it as a choice formed by reflection and specifically referred to it as a choice between good and evil. Nowak comments that Epictetus specifically defined προαίρεσις as "*le choix réfléchi et libre du bien ou du mal.*"[24] He adds: ". . . .elle passe de la signification

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[22]An excellent discussion of this type of gnostic dualism can be found in Peter Brown, *Augustine of Hippo*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1967), 46-60.

[23] cf. Edward Nowak, *Le Chrétien devant la Souffrance: Étude sur la Pensée de Jean Chrysostome,* (Paris: Beauchesne, 1972), 37.

[24] Ibid., 60.

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simple de choix à celle de souligner son élément raisonnable, le choix réfléchi, jusqu'a insister sur la liberté, le choix réfléchi et libre."[25] W.A. Oldfather normally translates Epictetus's use of προαίρεσις as "freedom of choice" or "moral purpose."[26]

In the patristic writers προαίρεσις is considered a property or privilege of human nature. It is what distinguishes human beings from animals or inanimate beings. Nowak notes that it is opposed to necessity (ἀνάγκη) and astral determinism. It is associated with the act of sin and is that element which creates genuine human moral responsibility for moral choices and actions. It is a human attribute that must be exercised for an act to be considered truly moral.[27] προαίρεσις is corrupted by sin and must act in response to and in cooperation with the grace of God, faith, and fellowship with God.[28] As we have already seen in my

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[25] Ibid., 60.

[26] cf. Epictetus, *Discourses*, I, tr. W.A. Oldfather, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1925), Book 1, 4. 2, Book 1, 1. 23, Book 1, 4. 18.

[27] Edward Nowak, *Le Chrétien devant la Souffrance*, 60; cf. G.W.H. Lampe, *A Patristic Greek Lexicon*, Vol. 2, 1133.

[28] For example, in his *Instruction to Catechumens,* Chrysostom writes: "For when grace has come, and driven away the darkness of the understanding, we learn the exact nature of things, and what was before dreadful to us becomes contemptible." As we will see, when the judgment is renewed by grace, the right choice and response becomes a genuine possibility. Chrysostom, *Instructions to Catechumens,* NPNF, First Series, Vol. 9, 2nd Instruction, 1, 166; cf. PG 49.233A. In a striking metaphor from his homilies on

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translation of προαίρεσις as "intention," it frequently is employed to signify human motivation, disposition, and intention. Nowak follows Lampe in also noting that it is used to describe the disposition of baptismal candidates, disposition in prayer, character, and temperament.[29]

As we move into Chrysostom's own understanding of προαίρεσις and its relationship to his views on providence and suffering, one must observe at the outset that he distinguishes the προαίρεσις from the soul (ψυχη), body (σῶμα), and the will (βοῦλησις).[30] In other words, *the faculty of the will is to be distinguished from the event or act of willing*, προαίρεσις itself. For example, in his homilies on Romans he writes:

> Now the essence of the soul and body and of that choice (προαίρεσις) are not the same, for the two first are God's works, and the other is a motion from ourselves towards whatever we please to direct it. For willing is indeed natural (ἔμφυτον), and is from God: *but willing* (Βούλησις) *on this wise is our own, and from our own mind* (γνώμη) (my emphasis).[31]

Matthew Chrysostom writes that virtue's web is woven from the interaction between our "willingness" and the grace of God. ". . . .a man's willingness (προθυμίας) is not sufficient, unless any one receive the succor from above; and that again we shall gain nothing by the succor from above, if there be not a willingness. . . .For indeed of these two things is virtue's web woven." Chrysostom, *Homilies on the Gospel of Saint Matthew*, NPNF, First Series, Vol.X, 4, 494-495; cf. PG 58.742D.

[29] Ibid., 60-61; cf. G.W.H. Lampe, *A Patristic Greek Lexicon*, Vol. 2, 1133-1134.

[30] Ibid., 61.

[31] Chrysostom, *The Epistle to the Romans*, NPNF, First Series, Vol. 11, Homily 13, 429; cf. PG 60.510C: Οὐ γὰρ

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The goal, then, will be a training or education of the gifts God has given to us, that is, our soul, mind, body, and will, so that the good and true choice can be made in the midst of the perplexities and turmoils of this present life. As we will see, Chrysostom will insist that the only true suffering Christians encounter is when they fail to exercise their προαίρεσις in light of what they know to be the truth.

Edward Nowak provides a helpful framework for comprehending the significant aspects of Chrysostom's understanding of προαίρεσις. First, he notes Chrysostom's stress on its free character. "We are free and masters of our own free choice."[32] Hence, Chrysostom consistently teaches throughout *On Providence* that the treatment he has to offer cannot be forced on anyone. "For I will not stop continually repeating this: it is not possible to force or constrain this cure on anyone who does not wish to be healed. . . ."[33] The message he has to offer "promises to

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ταυτὸν ψυχῆς οὐσία καὶ σώματος καὶ προαιρέσεως, ἀλλὰ τὰ μέν ἐστιν ἔργα θεοῦ, τὸ δὲ ἐξ ἡμῶν αὐτῶν γινομένη κίνησις, προὸς ὅπερ ἂν αὐτὴν βουληθῶμεν ἀγαγεῖν. Ἡ μὲν γὰρ Βούλησις, ἔμφυτον καὶ παρὰ θεοῦ· ἡ δὲ τοιάδε βούλησις, ἡμέτερον καὶ τῆς γνώμης ἡμῶν. Migne referenced in Nowak, *Le Chrétien devant la Souffrance*, 61.

[32] Chrysostom, *Postquam presb. Gothus 6*, PG 63, 509 A (my translation), quoted in Edward Nowak, *Le Chrétien devant la Souffrance*, 62.

[33] Chrysostom, *On Providence*, 1: 5; cf. SCh., *Sur la Providence de Dieu*, 1: 5, 58.

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free those who are overpowered" by recent persecutions, "provided they are willing."[34] The events God allows "can be a correction even for those who do not pay attention to the Scriptures, provided they are willing."[35] When Paul writes that we should assume the place of clay in the potter's hands, "He is certainly not destroying our free will by saying this." Rather, Paul is endeavoring to teach his readers to place themselves in the type of stance before God that facilitates the appropriate use of their free will.[36]

Secondly, Nowak explains Chrysostom's understanding of the mind's central role in the decision making process of the προαίρεσις. Indeed, the decision of the will to act or respond in a certain manner is largely determined by the judgment a human being makes concerning matters. Hence, Chrysostom will frequently couple together γνώμη and προαίρεσις.[37] We see this in our earlier reference to Abraham's firm intention (προαίρεσις) to obey God's command to sacrifice Isaac. The Greek text reads:

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[34] Ibid., 1: 3; cf. SCh., *Sur la Prov.*, 1: 3, 56.

[35] Ibid., 1: 4; cf. SCh. 1: 4, 58.

[36] Ibid., 2: 16; cf. SCh. *Sur la Prov.*, 2: 16, 70.

[37] Nowak explains: "Dans ce cas, il semble que la προαίρεσις subisse une sorte de décomposition analogue à celle qui se produit lorsque nous la traduisons par *choix réfléchi*, γνώμη représentant la décision appuyée sur des motifs clairement compris par l'intelligence, et προαίρεσις le mouvement volontaire qui la fait passer à l'acte." Edward Nowak, *Le Chrétien devant la Souffrance*, 62.

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> Οὐ γὰρ εἶπεν αὐτῷ " Ἀβραάμ" ἁπλῶς, ἀλλά " Ἀβραάμ, Ἀβραάμ", τῷ διπλασιασμῷ τῆς φωνῆς τὴν ἐπιτεταμένην πρὸς τὴν θυσίαν προαίρεσιν ἀνείργων τε καὶ ἀναχαιτίζων · οὕτως ὅλος τοῦ ἐπιτάγματος ἦν. Εἶδες πῶς τὸ πᾶν τῇ γνώμῃ αὐτοῦ ἐπεπλήρωτο καὶ σκάνδαλον οὐδαμοῦ.[38] Τὸ δὲ αἴτιον, τὸ μὴ περιεργάζεσθαι τὰ τοῦ θεοῦ.

A number of important observations need to be made. Abraham is able to exercise his προαίρεσις in a beneficial and proper way "because he had already accomplished the act in his intention" (τὸ πᾶν τῇ γνώμῃ αὐτοῦ ἐπεπλήρωτο). He had thought things through carefully, judged well, and acted accordingly. The apparent stumbling block posed by the command to sacrifice Isaac is traversed safely because Abraham has linked together proper judgment and appropriate action. Abraham is willing to act obediently on the basis of what he does know, though that knowledge is incomplete and in significant ways incomprehensible, *and it is within this posture that his understanding is expanded.* As we will later develop in our discussion of incomprehensibility, an important part of Abraham's successful response was his unwillingness to "meddle in God's affairs" (τὸ μὴ περιεργάζεσθαι τὰ τοῦ θεοῦ) and to obey apart from full knowledge of the "why and wherefore."

Thirdly, Nowak notes that Chrysostom considers the προαίρεσις rather than the οὐσία as the essential part of

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[38] SCh., *Sur la Providence de Dieu,* 10: 18, 160, 162.

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human nature which finally determines our ultimate destiny.[39] In his homilies on Colossians Chrysostom states: "The moral choice doth rather determine one than the substance, and is rather 'man' than the other. For his substance casteth him not into hell, nor leadeth him into the kingdom, but men themselves."[40] If this is the case, Chrysostom's insistence that the judgment and underlying disposition which forms that judgment be trained to respond in a healthy manner -- that is, to judge things correctly and not simply on appearances --begins to take on greater coherence. In fact, he will contend that much human suffering can be traced to ignorance, i.e., a failure to form a proper judgment concerning the affairs and circumstances of this life.[41]

The question we must now address is: "What are the main obstacles that prevent someone from clearly seeing the true nature of things and making a clear judgment?" Chrysostom

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[39] Edward Nowak, *Le Chrétien devant la Souffrance,* 63.

[40] Chrysostom, *Homilies on Colossians*, NPNF, First Series, Vol. 13, Homily 8, 294; cf. PG 62.353A, referenced in Nowak, *Le Chrétien devant la Souffrance,* 63. In his homilies on I Thessalonians Chrysostom writes: ". . . .ni la richesse ni la pauvreté qui causent notre perte, c'est notre προαίρεσις." Chrysostom, *In Ep. I ad Thess. 3,4,* PG 62, 412B, quoted in Nowak with his translation, 63. Nowak comments: "La προαίρεσις est donc pour Chrysostome une faculté si caractéristique de l'homme qu'elle reste pour lui un trait essentiel de la constitution humaine." Ibid., 63.

[41] Chrysostom writes: "There are many things which from ignorance alone cause us sorrow, so that if we come to understand them well, we banish our grief." Chrysostom, *Homilies on I Thessalonians*, NPNF, First Series, Homily 7, 352; cf. PG 62.435A. Migne referenced in Nowak, *Le Chrétien devant la Souffrance,* 64.

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contends that the passions (τὰ πάθη) are a key roadblock for the functioning of the judgment.[42] In his homilies on Acts he writes:

> It is not possible to be master of one's self, being in a passion (τὸν ὀργιζόμενον). Like a sea rolling mountains high, it is all hurly-burly: or even as a pure fountain, where mire is cast into it, becomes muddied, and all is in turmoil. . . .It is your own soul that you have cut open; it is there that you have inflicted a wound: you have flung your own charioteer from his horses, you have got him dragging along the ground upon his back.[43]

The passions, then, throw the faculty of reason (λογισμός) off balance. They throw blinders over the eyes of the mind that cripple its ability to form a realistic and fitting opinion, judgment, or conviction (κρίσις, δόξα) concerning basic moral values, i.e., what is genuinely good and genuinely evil, and prevent people from accepting, appreciating, and praising God's providential actions in the

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[42] I have found Edward Nowak's analysis of the passions, judgment, and the formation of true opinion to be of great help. cf. Edward Nowak, *Le Chrétien devant la Souffrance*, 63-73. Lampe appears to view the passions and the emotions as almost identical. He notes that patristic writers frequently link them to evil, sin, corruption, the Devil, and the flesh. Patristic sources argue that the passions darken the understanding, prevent the cultivation of virtue and spiritual peace, and war against prayer. Hence, the necessity of battling against them. In this battle, education, spiritual disciplines, and the sacraments all play an important role. cf. G.W.H. Lampe, *A Patristic Greek Lexicon*, Vol. 2, 992-993.

[43] Chrysostom, *Homilies on the Acts of the Apostles and the Epistles to the Romans*, NPNF, First Series, Vol. 9, Homily 15, 99; cf. PG 60.126C-D.

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world.[44]

Chrysostom's entire project in *On Providence* is to designed to provide an effective antidote for the disease of the passions. He pictures himself as a physician preparing a remedy for "all who are appalled by the events occurring in the world."[45] How?

> By preparing the medicine of the word. . . .For this remedy nourishes more than bread, restores more effectively than a drug and cauterizes more powerfully than fire without causing any pain. At the same time it checks the foul-smelling tides of perverse reasonings (πονηρῶν λογισμῶν).[46]

Chrysostom's goal is to release his readers from the influence of passions which prevent them from thinking correctly. If they continue to allow themselves to be governed by their passions, their reasonings about providence and life in general will remain distorted and twisted, and they will lack the eyes to truly discern what God is up to in the world. Not only will they fail to

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[44] L. Meyer comments that Chrysostom sees a direct link between sin, the passions, and spiritual blindness. "Chrysostome aime souvent à revenir sur ce sujet et à étudier les relations entre l'incrédulité et la vie mauvaise. Le péché obscurcit l'âme, y répand des ténèbres; elle ne peut plus discerner la valeur des choses. . . .Au contraire, celui qui ne se laisse pas dominer par ses passions comprend plus facilement les vérités de la foi, la providence par exemple, ou les grandeurs de Dieu, comme les saints." L. Meyer, *Saint Jean Chrysostome, Maître de la perfection chrétienne*, (Paris: Beauchesne, 1933), 53-54.

[45] Chrysostom, *On Providence,* Intro., 2; cf. SCh., *Sur la Prov.*, Prol., 2, 52.

[46] Ibid., Intro., 4; cf. SCh., *Sur la Prov.*, Prol., 4, 54.

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recognize him at work, but they will judge according to appearances. Things which are genuinely good will be branded as evil. Evils will be proclaimed as goods. And indifferent things will end up being improperly denigrated or lauded. The ultimate outcome is that God's providence is blasphemed.

A number of telling passages in *On Providence* illustrate this process and how Chrysostom works to combat it. In the midst of an extended discourse on the role of nature in demonstrating God's providence, Chrysostom digresses into a discussion of the beneficial aspects of death. Here, surely, is a genuine evil. And yet, Chrysostom argues, death is a benefit for both the one who has died and for those who remain behind.[47] How so? Those who remain behind receive a powerful lesson on the transitoriness of life and the danger of acting and living as though life would never end. One is "humbled, learns to act in a more level-headed fashion, is taught to think in a more spiritual manner, and introduces into his mind the

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[47] He writes: "If I had not already made my discourse exceedingly long and exceeded the proper measure, I would have much to say about death from a Christian perspective and would have shown especially in this the wisdom and providence of God. I would have said much concerning corruption, putrefaction, worms, and ashes. Since most people mourn and lament bitterly that our bodies will be reduced to ashes, dust, and worms, I would have shown his unspeakable providence and care from this very reality." Ibid., 7: 34; cf. SCh., *Sur la Prov.*, 7: 34, 128.

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mother of all goods, humility."[48] The one who has died is in no way wronged, "for he will receive this same body pure and incorruptible." Thus, death actually becomes "a teacher of the spiritual life, instructing the understanding, bridling the passions of the soul (τὰ πάθη τῆς ψυχῆς χαλινῶν), quelling its billows and creating calm."[49] Judged according to appearances, death can only be seen as an evil.[50] Seen in light of the realities the gospel represents, it becomes a genuine good.[51]

Another favorite illustration of Chrysostom's for highlighting the danger of the passions is the story of Joseph. Joseph clearly represents the ideal of the true Christian philosopher, i.e., the true Christian who bridles his passions, refuses to judge by appearances, and waits for the final outcome of events before passing judgment on God's providence. Other characters in the story, such as his brothers and Potiphar's wife, are portrayed by Chrysostom as prime examples of the folly and ruin which occur when the

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[48] Ibid., 7: 36; cf. SCh., *Sur la Prov.*, 7: 36, 128.

[49] Ibid., 7: 37; cf. SCh., *Sur la Prov.*, 7: 37, 128.

[50] Hence, the danger of an inexperienced and foolish person "immediately expressing at the outset a premature opinion" (ἐκ προοιμίων εὐθέως τὴν ψῆφον φέροντος). Ibid., 9: 3; cf. SCh., *Sur la Prov.*, 9: 3, 146.

[51] It must be stressed, however, that Chrysostom is only able to treat death as a good because of Christ and the work he accomplished. As we will see, he is eager to do this and does so in his analysis of the benefits of the cross.

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passions run out of control.

The responses of Joseph's brothers to his dream that he would one day rule over them are a veritable litany of disordered passions: They became "more savage than wolves toward their brother."[52] "The father of this war was *irrational envy and unjust malice. Seething with anger. . . .envy kindling this furnace and stirring up the fire*" (my emphasis).[53] When they are prevented from actually carrying out the murder by Rueben "their anger boiled anew, their wrath reached its zenith, and *their passions raged out of control like a storm at sea.*"[54] They are consumed by a "madness" which ultimately leads to the sale of Joseph into slavery.

Joseph's trials, however, are only beginning. In a sense, he leaves one insane asylum only to enter another, that of Potiphar's wife. Once Potiphar's wife lays eyes on Joseph, her passions explode in heated desire. She is "beside herself over the beauty of the young man."[55] Each day she goes out in search of her prey, "*incited by her*

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[52] Ibid., 10: 20; cf. SCh., *Sur la Prov.*, 10: 20, 162.

[53] Ibid., 10: 21; cf. SCh., *Sur la Prov.*, 10: 21, 162.

[54] Ibid., 10: 24; cf. SCh., *Sur la Prov.*, 10: 24, 164.

[55] Ibid., 10: 30; cf. SCh., *Sur la Prov.*, 10: 30, 168.

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passion and unbridled love" (my emphasis).[56] Still, despite "her appearance and frenzied passion," Joseph withstands her temptations. When Joseph refuses her advances and flees the scene naked, she is overtaken by anger; "*another even more grievous passion,* joined in with extreme savagery" (my emphasis).[57]

Both Joseph's brothers and Potiphar's wife serve as apt foils for Joseph's own response to his difficulties. For Chrysostom, both *what* God in his providence allows to occur in Joseph's life and *how* Joseph responds are of central importance. First, God makes a great promise to Joseph in a dream that he will rule over his brothers. Second, God allows events to occur that according to all appearances are contrary to what he has promised.[58]

As for Joseph, when he is plotted against by his brothers, "he exhibited the *disposition* of a brother" (τὴν ἀδελφικὴν ἐπεδείκνυτο διάθεσιν)(my emphasis).[59] When he is sold into slavery he maintains an even keel. Despite his tremendous suffering and difficult circumstances, matters

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[56] Ibid., 10: 31; cf. SCh., *Sur la Prov.*, 10: 31, 168.

[57] Ibid., 10: 33; cf. SCh., *Sur la Prov.*, 10: 33, 170.

[58] ". . . . the events which were occurring after the visions were contrary to the dreams." Ibid., 10: 19; cf. SCh., *Sur la Prov.*, 10: 19, 162.

[59] Ibid., 10: 23; cf. SCh., *Sur la Prov.*, 10: 23, 164.

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Chrysostom makes no attempt to disguise or downplay, Joseph is neither baffled or shocked.[60] The allurements of Potiphar's wife are easily overcome, not because the temptations weren't genuine -- Chrysostom paints a vivid picture of their reality -- but because Joseph's disposition in these circumstances and resulting response were governed by a specific understanding of God's providence. He knew and understood what God had promised. He realized that a clear comprehension of matters would have to wait "the final outcome of events." He recognized "full well the resourcefulness of God and the ingenuity of his wisdom."[61] Joseph's response to his present suffering was framed by assuming a specific hermeneutic stance before God and his providence. That is to say, how he chooses to respond in his circumstances, his προαίρεσις, is molded by a willingness to couch his judgment within certain specific guidelines, i.e., the nature of God's character, the incomprehensibility of his providence, and the guarantee of deliverance in the future (eschatological hope). Other favorite biblical characters of Chrysostom such as Abraham

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[60] "Nevertheless, he was not baffled by any of these things. . . .He was not at all troubled there, nor was he shocked by the occurrence of these events, for he reminded himself of the dreams which announced contrary things. Neither was he unduly concerned about these matters, asking himself: 'How could these things have ever happened?'" Ibid., 10: 27-28; cf. SCh., *Sur la Prov.*, 10: 27-28, 166, 168.

[61] Ibid., 10: 40; cf. SCh., *Sur la Prov.*, 10: 40, 174.

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and David consistently demonstrate this same kind of perspective. They are the true Christian philosophers, a concept we need to clearly understand if we are to appreciate Chrysostom's ideas on providence and suffering.

What is the primary characteristic of the genuine Christian or Christian philosopher? The authentic Christian is able to make a proper distinction between good things, bad things, and indifferent things. Genuinely good things (ἀγαθά, καλά) consist of the fundamental virtues such as temperance and generosity. Bad things (κακά) are categorized as any sinful acts or attitudes (luxury, lust). Indifferent things (ἀδιάφορα) *become good or bad according to how one uses them.* For example, wealth can lead to avarice or generosity. Poverty can lead to blasphemy or true philosophy.[62]

Good things (the virtues) possess as a primary characteristic that they can never become bad. Truly bad things (sins) can never become good. All other things, such as sickness, death, insults, riches, dishonor, freedom, and servitude, become good or bad according to how they are understood and utilized by the human being experiencing

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[62] For this classification, cf. Chrysostom, *Ego Dominus Deus* 5, PG 56, 149 B. Ibid., 6, 56, 150 D, referenced in Nowak, *Le Chrétien devant la Souffrance,* 68. This specific classification is not found in *On Providence,* but underlies Chrysostom's analysis of human response to providence and his use of key verbs such as φιλοσοφέω. I am indebted to Edward Nowak's discussion of this classification and its relationship to Chrysostom's thought.

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them. Nowak argues that Chrysostom employs this moral classification as a fundamental grid for understanding human suffering. Indifferent things (ἀδιάφορα) take on a moral value according to the προαίρεσις of the individual. Chrysostom writes:

> Life itself belongs to that middle class of indifferent things, whilst to live well or ill is in ourselves. We do not hate life, for we may live well too. So even if we use it ill, we do not even then cast the blame on it. And wherefore? *Because not itself, but the free choice of those who use it ill is to blame*" (my emphasis) (ἀλλ᾽ ἡ προαίρεσις τῶν κακῶς χρωμένων αὐτῷ).[63]

The relationship, then, between a correct judgment and the question of suffering is immediate. The Christian will suffer only by classifying an indifferent thing as an evil, or by actually sinning. These are the only two possibilities. Nowak comments: "Cette distinction des choses en trois catégories [good, bad, and indifferent] est chez notre auteur d'une importance capitale pour la question de la souffrance."[64] The mistake that most people make in their understanding of suffering and providence is a mistake in moral discernment. Indifferent things are classified as evils and unnecessary suffering results.

How can one avoid this common error? Through immersing

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63 Chrysostom, NPNF, First Series, Vol. 13, *Homilies on Philippians,* Homily 3, 196; cf. PG 62.202D. Migne referenced in Nowak, *Le Chrétien devant la Souffrance,* 68.

64 Nowak, *Le Chrétien devant la Souffrance,* 69.

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the mind in sound Christian doctrine so that correct judgments can be formed. Thus, "Christian philosophy" for Chrysostom is the art of learning to think and to live like a disciple of Jesus Christ. Christian φιλοσοφία is Christian thinking and living as opposed to the life and thought of the pagan world. It is a way of life founded on the basic tenets of the Christian faith.[65] Anne-Marie Malingrey comments:

> Dans l'ensemble de son oeuvre, Jean met sous le mot *philosophia* la pratique des vertues chrétiennes. . . . Le portrait du *vrai philosophe* que Jean esquisse in maint endroit est celui du chrétien: 'Quel est le propre du philosophe? N'est-ce pas de mépriser la richesse et la gloire et de s'élever au-dessus de l'envie et de tout mouvement irraisonné de l'âme?' La sagesse païenne ne demandait pas autre chose, dira-t-on. Et il est bien vrai que le *philosophos* de Jean, Abraham. . . . a des traits communs avec celui d'Épictète. Mais à la base de cette philosophie est d'abord la foi. C'est la foi, d'où naît l'espérance, qui donne leur plénitude aux vertus de détachement et de maîtrise de soi, en les orientant vers l'éternité.[66]

Christian philosophy is not simply a way of thinking, a set of ideas, but rather "l'incarnation de la foi chrétienne, avec toutes les exigences qu'elle

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[65] cf. Anne-Marie Malingrey, "*Philosophia*": *Étude d'un groupe de mots dans la littérature grecque, des Présocratiques au IV siècle après J.-C.*, (Paris: Librairie C. Klincksieck, 1961), 263-269.

[66] Ibid., 285. In a significant passage, Chrysostom writes: "C'est la foi qui nous rend vraiment philosophes; elle nous découvre le néant des choses humaines et, abandonnant les raisonnements, elle philosophe sur les choses du ciel." *In Ioan. hom., LXIII,* 3, PG 59.352, quoted in Malingrey, "*Philosophia*," 285.

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comporte. . . .[67] The essential point to grasp is that indifferent things become good or bad according to the disposition (γνώμη) of the individual, which is in direct relation to how one will exercise the προαίρεσις or moral choice. Those who behave in a Christian manner or exercise Christian philosophy will make the right choice because their γνώμη and προαίρεσις have been molded by the gospel. They will maintain a hermeneutic stance before God that is formed by the realities Christ represents and will not be thrown off their feet when circumstances take on an apparent dark cast.

Chrysostom's use of the φιλοσοφέω/φιλόσοφος word group in *On Providence* illustrates well his dynamic understanding of the Christian life and the importance of *thinking and living well* if one is to understand God's actions in the world:

a. 2: 3 -- In an extended encomium on the apostle Paul, Chrysostom asks rhetorically, οὐ βαρβάρους φιλοσοφεῖν ἔπεισεν; "Didn't he persuade barbarian peoples *to become*

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[67] Ibid., 288. Nowak notes that in Chrysostom "philosophy" is not so much a speculative science as a philosophy of practical living, a strenous effort toward virtue and perfection. "Le christianisme est, d'après lui, la véritable philosophie, non pas tellement comme système de doctrines, mais plutôt comme 'vie, conduite et ascèse.'" Nowak, *Le Chrétien devant la Souffrance,* 71; cf. A. Uleyn, *La doctrine morale de s. Jean Chrysostome dans le Commentaire sur saint Matthieu et ses affinités avec la diatribe,* in *Revue de l'Univ. d'Ottawa* 27, 2 (1957), 110, n.34, quoted in Nowak, 71.

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Christians?"[68] Conversion entails both a certain mind-set and a willingness to adopt a corresponding style of living.

b. 7: 2 -- Chrysostom writes that nature is aptly suited to the needs of humanity. Τὴν γὰρ θαυμασίαν ταύτην καὶ παναρμόνιον κτίσιν δι᾽ οὐδένα ἕτερον ἐποίησεν ἢ διὰ σέ. . . . .καὶ πρὸς σώματος διατροφὴν καὶ σύστασιν καὶ πρὸς φιλοσοφίαν. . . . "He created this praiseworthy and all-harmonious universe for no one else but you. . . . .apt for the sustenance and formation of the body, *the growth of the spiritual life.*"[69]

c. 7: 36, 37 -- Death, an apparent evil, is actually beneficial when viewed from the proper perspective. The sight of death teaches one "to act in a more level-headed fashion," and "*to think in a more spiritual manner*" (φιλοσοφεῖν παιδεύεται). Indeed, "death has been introduced into our present existence *as a teacher of the spiritual life*" (διδάσκαλος φιλοσοφίας ὁ θάνατος εἰσηνέχθη εἰς τὸν ἡμέτερον Βίον) for the specific task of "instructing the understanding" and "bridling the passions of the soul" (παιδαγωγῶν τὴν διάνοιαν καὶ τὰ πάθη τῆς ψυχῆς χαλινῶν).[70] As the mind is instructed our perspective is changed and our

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[68] Chrysostom, *On Providence*, 2: 3; cf. SCh., *Sur la Prov.*, 2: 3, 60.

[69] Ibid., 7: 2; cf. SCh., *Sur la Prov.*, 7: 2, 108.

[70] Ibid., 7: 36-37; cf. SCh., *Sur la Prov.*, 7: 36-37, 128.

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reactions to an apparent evil are transformed.

d. 8: 4 -- Chrysostom speaks of God transporting "admirable men *filled with an awareness of spiritual truth* from one place to another" (Καὶ γὰρ ἄνδρας θαυμαστοὺς καὶ φιλοσοφίας γέμοντας ἀπὸ τόπων εἰς τόπους μετήγαγε).[71]

e. 13: 5 -- Once again Abraham is forced to take to the road as a wanderer, this time because of a famine in Canaan. His mature response to his sufferings and God's providence is emphasized by Chrysostom: "Yet he was neither troubled nor alarmed, but demonstrated the same obedience, *spiritual insight,* and patient endurance" (οὐδὲ ἐταράττετο, ἀλλὰ τὴν αὐτὴν ὑπακοὴν καὶ φιλοσοφίαν καὶ ὑπομονὴν ἐπεδείκνυτο). Because Abraham's insight has been formed by his knowledge of God and the lessons learned as he submits to God's actions in light of the divine promise, he exercises his προαίρεσις in a mature and healthy way in response to God's mysterious providential actions, despite the suffering they sometimes entail.[72] He demonstrates genuine φιλοσοφία.

f. 14: 6, 9, 11 -- Paul's attitude to his imprisonment reflects the same dynamic. Chrysostom writes: "Do you see the courage? Do you recognize the boldness? Do you discern

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[71] Ibid., 8: 4; cf. SCh., *Sur la Prov.*, 8: 4, 134.

[72] Ibid., 13: 5; cf. SCh., *Sur la Prov.*, 13: 5, 190; Anne-Marie Malingrey, "*Philosophia*", pp. 230-232.

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his soul's perseverance? *Do you perceive the spiritual perspective of a Christian?*" (Εἶδες ἀνδρείαν; εἶδες παρρησίαν; εἶδες εὐτονίαν ψυχῆς; εἶδες φιλόσοφον γνώμην;)[73] Paul's perspective is shaped by the gospel. Courage, boldness, and perseverance are the result. The imprisonment itself is an indifferent thing. If Paul's perspective wasn't a mature one, he might well be suffering a great deal. But, Chrysostom insists, because he has a φιλόσοφον γνώμην, an indifferent matter is turned to the good.

Further in his narrative, Chrysostom employs the example of the thief on the cross to respond to those who would argue that not all people benefit from suffering and trials in the same manner as a Paul or an Abraham:

> One might reply, "Others were dragged down by these events." Yes, I would not dispute this. For it is probable that many people would be tripped up by these kinds of events. But, as I have often said and will not cease saying, I will also affirm at this present juncture: the people who stumble over these occurrences would be more correct in reckoning their stumbling to themselves and not to the nature of the events.[74]

The thief on the cross illustrates this very principle. Chrysostom deliberately juxtaposes the response of the crowd of mockers surrounding the cross and that of the thief. The crowd stumbles over the event of the cross.[75] The thief

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[73] Chrysostom, *On Providence,* 14 6; cf. SCh., *Sur la Prov.*, 14: 6, 204.

[74] Ibid., 14: 7; cf. SCh., *Sur la Prov.*, 14: 7, 206.

[75] Chrysostom asks: "How many stumbled over the cross of

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witnesses the very same event and yet responds in an entirely different manner.

> Indeed, the thief on the cross condemns these kinds of people; for he saw Christ crucified and not only did not stumble in his faith, but in the event of the crucifixion received a greater reason *to think like a Christian* (my emphasis)(ἀλλὰ καὶ ἐντεῦθεν μείζονα ὑπὸθεσιν ἔλαβεν εἰς το φιλοσοφῆσαι).[76]

What were the significant elements that framed the thief's appropriate response to the cross? First, he had "moved beyond all human speculations."[77] His *perception* of Christ's suffering was molded by a certain hermeneutical stance, part of which involved a willingness to bridle an speculative curiosity. Second, his faith lifted him beyond the immediate situation. Broader considerations, such as his eschatological hope for the future, determined his present response to the apparent defeat and death of the Son of God. ". . . . he was lifted up by the wings of faith, and meditated on the things of the future"(τῷ πτερῷ τῆς

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our Master -- a cross shared by all of us -- and became even more lawless and insolent?. . . .Nevertheless, these people have no excuse because of the scandal of the cross." (Πόσοι τῷ σταυρῷ αὐτοῦ τοῦ κοινοῦ πάντων ἡμῶν Δεσπότου ἐσκανδαλίσθησαν καὶ παρανομώτεροι καὶ θρασύτεροι. . . . 9. Ἀλλ' ὅμως οὐκ ἂν ἔχοιεν ἀπολογίαν οὗτοι διὰ τὸν σταυρόν.) Ibid., 14: 8-9; cf. SCh., *Sur la Prov.*, 14: 8-9, 206.

[76] Ibid., 14: 9; cf. SCh., *Sur la Prov.*, 14: 9, 208.

[77] Ibid., 14: 9; cf. SCh., *Sur la Prov.*, 14: 9, 208.

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πίστεως κουφισθείς, περὶ τῶν μελλόντων ἐφιλοσόφει.)[78] The thief "pondered the resurrection" (περὶ ἀναστάσεως ἐφιλοσόφει).[79] His attentive and submissive stance or disposition before God enables him to perceive the situation correctly. The crowd, on the other hand, are "senseless and negligent" (ἀγνώμονες καὶ ἠμελημένοι) and miss the wonder and benefit of the cross.[80] All they are able to *perceive* in the event is based on appearances. They remain unable to see beneath the surface.

The thief is an apt example of those "who have a right disposition and are vigilant" and thereby "derive a tremendous profit from those things which scandalize others" (οἱ δὲ εὐγνώμονες καὶ νήφοντες ἀφ' ὧν ἕτεροι σκανδαλιζονται, ἀπὸ τούτων τὰ μέγιστα ὠφελοῦνται).[81] The cross, then, clearly fits into Chrysostom's category of indifferent events. It is not the event, but rather the disposition of those who observe it that determines how they will respond and whether benefit or shock will result.[82]

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[78] Ibid., 14: 9; cf. SCh., *Sur la Prov.*, 14: 9, 208.

[79] Ibid., 14: 11; cf. SCh., *Sur la Prov.*, 14: 11, 208.

[80] Ibid., 14: 13; cf. SCh., *Sur la Prov.*, 14: 13, 208.

[81] Ibid., 14: 13; cf. SCh., *Sur la Prov.*, 14: 13, 208, 210.

[82] In his next chapter Chrysostom begins by insisting that only "senseless people" (οἱ ἀνόητοι) are scandalized by the "foremost good, that is to say, the cross through which the world was saved." Viewed from the proper perspective,

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Therefore, as Chrysostom draws near the conclusion of *On Providence, he* exhorts his readers: "*Learn to think and live like a Christian,* and you will not only not be harmed by any of these events, but will reap the greatest benefits" (Μάθε φιλοσοφεῖν καὶ οὐ μόνον οὐδὲν ἐκ τῶν τοιούτων βλαβήσῃ, ἀλλὰ καὶ τὰ μέγιστα κερδανεῖς). [83]

To summarize, the one who has learned to think like a Christian (φιλοσοφεῖν), the one whose thinking has been shaped by the gospel and the realities it represents, will not judge by appearances. Instead, genuine believers will remain sensible and vigilant, wary of making a premature judgement concerning God's actions or permission. They will understand that the events of this life *in themselves* are indifferent matters and take on the character of good or evil *according to our response to them.* [84] Chrysostom

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i.e., the stance of faith, the cross is perceived to be of infinite worth. Interestingly enough, among the benefits of the cross which Chrysostom lists, he mentions the "new and marvellous *Christian way of life*" (my emphasis) (ὁ τὴν καινὴν ταύτην καὶ ξένην φιλοσοφίαν) which the cross has "planted" on the earth. Ibid., 15: 1; cf. SCh., *Sur la Prov.*, 15: 1, 215.

[83] Ibid., 22: 11; cf. SCh., *Sur la Prov.*, 22: 11, 262.

[84] Those who stumble over the events God allows to occur "would be more correct in reckoning their stumbling to themselves, and not to the nature of the events." Ibid., 14: 7; cf. SCh., *Sur la Prov.*, 14: 7, 206. "For those who stumbled before the event of the cross would be more correct in reckoning their problem to themselves. It is exactly the same case now. For the stumbling block does not arise from the nature of the cross, but rather from the folly of those who are scandalized." Ibid., 15: 3-4; cf. SCh., *Sur la Prov.*, 15: 3-4, 216. "I will not stop saying the same

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unfailingly insists that it is the human response -- a response governed by a disposition formed by the Holy Spirit as individuals accept the truths of the gospel and incorporate them into their lives -- that is the central determinant in the question of good and evil.[85] In contrast,

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things again -- let the stumbling blocks be reckoned to themselves." Ibid., 15: 7; cf. SCh., *Sur la Prov.*, 15: 7, 218. ". . . .recognize first that the stumbling blocks arise from their own weakness and not from the events themselves." Ibid., 18: 1; cf. SCh., *Sur la Prov.*, 18: 1, 232.

[85] The characteristic words and phrases Chrysostom uses in *On Providence* to describe the character and actions of the genuine believer should be noted: "well-disposed" (εὐγνώμοσιν), 6: 1; cf. SCh., *Sur la Prov.*, 6: 1, 94; "sensible" (εὐγνώμοσιν), 7: 1; cf. SCh., *Sur la Prov.*, 7: 1, 108; "they bore all things nobly" (ἀλλ᾽ ἔφερον ἅπαντα γενναίως), 11: 1; cf. SCh. *Sur la Prov.*, 11: 1, 178; "nobly fixed on God" (῾Ο μὲν γὰρ γενναίως ἤδη πεπηγώς), 12: 2; cf. SCh., *Sur la Prov.*, 12: 2, 182; "sober-minded" (νήφουσι), 12: 4; cf. SCh., *Sur la Prov.*, 12: 4, 184; "attentive" (νήφειν), 12: 7; cf. SCh., *Sur la Prov.*, 12: 7, 186; "awake" (ἐγρηγορέναι), 12: 7; cf. SCh., *Sur la Prov.*, 12: 7, 186; "obedience" (ὑπακοὴν), 13: 5; cf. SCh., *Sur la Prov.*, 13: 5, 190; "spiritual insight" (φιλοσοφίαν), 13: 5; cf. SCh., *Sur la Prov.*, 13: 5, 190; "patient endurance" (ὑπομονὴν), 13: 5; cf. SCh., *Sur la Prov.*, 13: 5, 190; "bearing all things nobly" (πάντα ἔφερε γενναίως), 13: 6; cf. SCh., *Sur la Prov.*, 13: 6, 192; "well-disposed soul" (εὐγνώμονα....ψυχὴν), 13: 8; cf. SCh., *Sur la Prov.*, 13: 8, 192; "noble....soul" (γενναία....ψυχὴ), 13: 21; cf. SCh., *Sur la Prov.*, 13: 21, 200; "right disposition" (εὐγνώμονες), 14: 13; cf. SCh., *Sur la Prov.*, 14: 13, 208; "vigilant" (νήφοντες), 14: 13; cf. SCh., *Sur la Prov.*, 14: 13, 210; "those who have stood firm and remain steady" (τοὺς παγίως ἑστῶτας καὶ ἀκινήτους μένοντας), 18: 1; cf. SCh., *Sur la Prov.*, 18: 1, 232; "reasonably disposed" (εὐγνωμόνως), 22: intro.; cf. SCh., *Sur la Prov.*, 22: intro., 256; "if they are alert", "for those who are alert" (ἐὰν νήγωσι, τοῖς νήφουσιν), 22: 1; cf. SCh., *Sur la Prov.*, 22: 1, 256; "those who are vigilant, those who are watchful" (τοὺς νήφοντας, τοὺς ἐγρηγορότας), 22: 5; cf. SCh., *Sur la Prov.*, 22: 5, 258; "invincible soul, unenslaved mind....bold confidence" (ψυχὴν ἀπερίτρεπτον, φρόνημα ἀδούλωτον....παρρησίας), 22: 5;

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those who are "worldly, difficult to lead, self-willed, and utterly carnal," will continually misread God's providence because they lack the eyes to see him at work, a vision which only comes to those who are actively exercising faith, i.e., allowing their perspective to be shaped by the gospel and acting accordingly.[86]

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cf. SCh., *Sur la Prov.*, 22: 5, 258; "the solid rock of discretion" (τὴν στερεὰν τῆς σωφροσύνης πέτραν), 22: 14; cf. SCh., *Sur la Prov.*, 22: 14, 264; "wisdom and self-control" (σωφροσύνης), 22: 14; cf. SCh., *Sur la Prov.*, 22: 14, 264; "to be patient, to practice self-restraint, to bear trials, to demonstrate endurance" (καρτερεῖν, ἐγκρατεύεσθαι, φέρειν πειρασμούς, ὑπομονὴν ἐπιδείκνυσθαι), 23: 3; cf. SCh., *Sur la Prov.*, 23: 3, 270; and "surrounded by the wall of endurance, diligence, gentleness, and courage" (ὑπομονῆς τεῖχος ἕκαστος περιβεβλημένος, ἐμμελείας, πραότητος, ἀνδρείας), 23: 4; cf. SCh., *Sur la Prov.*, 23: 4, 270. As we will discuss later in this essay, Chrysostom sees the development of these characteristics as a process, and the circumstances of this life as the gymnasium in which they learned and cultivated.

[86] "πήλινοι καὶ δυσανάγωγοι καὶ δυσπειθεῖς καὶ αὐτόσαρκες". Ibid., 7: 1; cf. SCh., *Sur la Prov.*, 7: 1, 108. Other terms and phrases that Chrysostom employs in *On Providence* to describe the character or actions of those who fail to discern or understand God's providence are "inexperience" (ἀπειρίας), "folly" (ἀνοίας), 9: 3; cf. SCh., *Sur la Prov.*, 9: 3, 146; "contentious" (φιλόνεικος), "bold" (τολμηρὸς), 9: 5; cf. SCh., *Sur la Prov.*, 9: 5, 146; "senseless people who are dragged down to the earth" (τῶν ἀνοήτων. . . .καὶ χαμαὶ συρομένων), 10: 11; cf. SCh., *Sur la Prov.*, 10: 11, 156; "faint-heartedness" (τὴν μικροψυχίαν), "weakness" (τὴν εὐτελειαν), 10: 16; cf. SCh., 10: 16, 160; "weak, feeble, and careless" (ἀσθενὴς καὶ διαρρέων καὶ ὀλίγωρος), 12: 2; cf. SCh., 12: 2, 182; "carelessness" (ἀπροσεξίαν), "thoughtlessness" (ῥᾳθυμίαν), 12: 7; cf. SCh., *Sur la Prov.*, 12: 7, 186; "senseless" (ἀγνώμονες), 14: 13; cf. SCh., *Sur la Prov.*, 14: 13, 208; "negligent" (ἠλελημένοι), 14: 13, 208; "willful misunderstanding" (ἀγνωμοσύνην), 15: 7; cf. SCh., *Sur la Prov.*, 15: 7, 218; "stupid" (βλᾶκας), 22: 4, cf. SCh., *Sur la Prov.*, 22: 4, 258; "lighter than leaves" (φύλλων κουφοτέρους), 22: 4; cf. SCh., *Sur la Prov.*, 22: 4, 258; and "undisciplined" (ἀκόλαστος), 22: 15; cf. SCh., *Sur la Prov.*, 22: 15, 264.

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Before moving on to our next major theme in *On Providence*, that of the incomprehensibility of God's actions in the world, a few words need to be said in reference to Chrysostom's insistence that "no other person is able to harm the one who does not harm himself."[87] In chapter sixteen of *On Providence,* Chrysostom weaves together two themes which are closely connected to what he has already said about the centrality of a proper disposition. First, each character he mentions in chapter sixteen experiences significant suffering. Abel is murdered by his brother. Jacob lives in hunger as an exile. Joseph suffers as a slave and prisoner, the victim of terrible slander. Moses endures the continual rebellion and rejection of Israel. Job is attacked by the myriad devices of the devil. Shadrach, Meshach, Abednego, and Daniel are exposed to countless dangers in Babylon. Elijah lives in dire poverty as a fugitive and wanderer. David suffers at the hand of Saul and later is attacked by his own son. John the Baptist is beheaded by Herod.[88]

And yet in the case of each of these biblical examples, Chrysostom asks in what way they were harmed by their sufferings. Suffering takes place, but harm is avoided.

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[87] Ibid., 16: intro.; cf. SCh., *Sur la Prov.*, 16: intro., 220; cf. also Chrysostom, *No One Can Harm the Man Who Does Not Harm Himself*, NPNF, First Series, Vol. 9, 271-284; cf. PG 52.458-480.

[88] Ibid., 16: 1-4; cf., SCh., *Sur la Prov.*, 16: 1-4, 220, 222.

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Clearly in his thinking suffering and harm are two entirely different things. For example, in speaking of the martyrs he writes:

> In what way were the martyrs harmed, whose souls were broken by the most severe tortures? Didn't they all shine most brightly at the very moment they were being abused, at the time others set traps for them, when they nobly stood firm while suffering the worst agonies?[89]

Chrysostom consistently argues in *On Providence* that the perspective the gospel provides effectively sucks the harm out of human suffering. Harm as a continuing, unjust, unrighteous reality, a permanent source of lasting damage to the Christian, is conquered through the realities God has introduced into the world through Christ. In a very real sense, suffering overcomes harm through the cross of Christ.

Whether we are harmed by the sufferings we encounter in this life, then, *depends upon our proper response to them* in light of both <u>what</u> Christ has accomplished on our behalf and <u>how</u> he conducted and completed his work. As Chrysostom writes in his homilies on the Pastoral Epistles: "For it rests with us either to profit, or to be injured, by afflictions. *It depends not upon the nature of the affliction, but upon the disposition of our own minds* (οὐ παρὰ τὴν φύσιν τῶν δεινῶν τοῦτο γίνεται, ἀλλὰ παρὰ τὴν

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[89] Ibid., 16, 4; cf., SCh., *Sur la Prov.*, 16, 4, 222.

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ἡμετέραν προαίρεσιν)."[90]

Too often the transformation of the relationship between harm and suffering in Chrysostom's thought is underplayed or misunderstood by his interpreters through an overemphasis on the Stoic background of his ideas. Edward Nowak, for instance, duly notes the presence of Stoic influence in Chrysostom's use of the categories of good, bad, and indifferent things,[91] but goes too far when he writes:

> En distinguant entre biens ou maux véritables et apparents, et en parlant de choses 'indifférentes', il élimine la souffrance. Seule celle qui provient du mal moral est légitime selon lui; toute autre n'a pas le droit e'exister chez un chrétien-philosophe. On peut donc lui objecter qu'il méconnaît étrangement, de ce seul fait, l'expérience humaine qui, en dépit des raisonnements les plus irréfutables, constate la réalité douloureuse de la souffrance en la ressentant.[92]

Nowak's judgment must be critiqued, at least as far as it does not allow enough room for Chrysostom's own sensitivity to the reality of human suffering. Chrysostom knew that suffering entailed genuine pain and sorrow and never tried to disguise that fact. In his letters to Olympias, for example, he writes of his own trials in exile:

For the winter, which has become more than commonly

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[90] Chrysostom, *Homilies on Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, Thessalonians, Timothy, Titus, and Philemon*, NPNF, First Series, Vol. 13, *2nd Timothy*, Homily 9, 512; cf. PG 62.654C.

[91] cf. Michel Spanneut, *Le Stoïcisme des Pères de L'Église*, (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1957), 98-99.

[92] Edward Nowak, *The Chrétien devant la Souffrance: Étude sur la Pensée de Jean Chrysostome*, 223.

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> severe, brought on a storm of internal disorder even more distressing, and during the last two months I have been no better than one dead, nay worse. . . .I spent all my time closely confined to my bed, and in spite of endless contrivances I could not shake off the pernicious effects of the cold; but although I kept a fire burning, and endured a most unpleasant amount of smoke, and remained cooped up in one chamber, covered with any quantity of wraps, and not daring to set a foot outside the threshold I underwent extreme sufferings, perpetual vomiting supervening on headache, loss of appetite, and constant sleeplessness.[93]

Not only is he fully cognizant of the very real nature of his own sufferings, but he is diligent to counsel Olympias to take care of her own health because of the oppressive nature of sickness and his awareness of how illness can sap away spiritual strength:[94]

> Wherefore I beseech thee dear lady, and entreat thee as a very great favour to pay great attention to the restoration of thy bodily health. For dejection causes sickness; and when the body is exhausted and enfeebled, and remains in a neglected condition, deprived of the assistance of physicians, and of a wholesome climate, and an abundant supply of the necessaries of life, consider how great an aggravation of distress is occasioned thereby.[95]

Chrysostom's correspondence with Olympias demonstrates well his awareness of the frailty of the human condition and

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[93] Chrysostom, *Letters of St. Chrysostom to Olympias,* tr. W.R.W. Stephens, NPNF, First Series, Vol. 9, 297; cf. SCh., Vol. 13, *Lettres à Olympias,* (Paris: Les Éditions du Cerf, 1968), intro., text critique, traduction et notes par Anne-Marie Malingrey, Lettre 12, 7-10, 12-19, 316.

[94] In referring to Job's sufferings Chrysostom writes: "But when he was delivered over to sickness and sores, then did he also long for death, then did he also bewail himself and lament, so that you may understand *how this kind of suffering is more severe than all others, and this form of patience the highest of all*" (my emphasis). Ibid., 294; cf. SCh., Tome 13, Lettre 17, 14-21, 368.

[95] Ibid., Letter 2, 293.

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his sensitivity to the intimate relationship between physical and spiritual well being. We see the same insight in his counsel to those who are grieving. As we have already seen, he does not hesitate to speak of the valuable lessons that can be learned from death and the attitude of faith a Christian should exercise when death occurs.[96] And yet he deeply aware of the pain that the separation of death produces for those left behind and recognizes that this sorrow is a fitting human response.

In his homilies on 1 Corinthians, for example, he aptly balances both sides of the question in his discussion of Job's grief over the loss of his children. Job was "a father and a loving father: and it was meet that. . . .the compassion of his nature should be shown (καὶ ἔδει καὶ τὴν τῆς φύσεως δειχθῆναι συμπάθειαν)." Self-command apart from a demonstration of genuine compassion and grief over the loss of his children could easily be misinterpreted as "mere insensibility. Therefore he indicates both his natural affection (τὰ σπλάγχνα) and the exactness of his piety, and in his grief he was not overthrown (καὶ ἀλγήσας οὐ

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[96] For example, in his homilies on John's gospel Chrysostom writes: "Thou wast born man, and mortal; why then grievest thou that what is natural hath come to pass? Grievest thou that thou art nourished by eating? Seekest thou to live without this? *Act thus also in the case of death, and being mortal seek not as yet for immortality. Once for all this thing hath been appointed. Grieve not therefore, nor play the mourner, but submit to laws laid on all alike*" (my emphasis). Chrysostom, *Homilies on the Gospel of St. John and The Epistle to the Hebrews,* NPNF, First Series, Vol. 14, *Homilies on the Gospel of John,* Homily 62, 231; cf. PG 59.348D.

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περιετράπη)."[97] Chrysostom rightly argues that even in our grief our minds are to bring to the foreground the truths of the gospel, but also acknowledges that tears are appropriate, both for those who have suffered loss and for those who rightly identify with them in their grief.[98]

An important distinction, then, can be drawn in Chrysostom's thought *between suffering and harmful suffering.* All Christians can expect to suffer. In fact, Christianity and suffering go hand in hand. But the harmful

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[97] Chrysostom, *Homilies on the Epistles to the Corinthians, First Corinthians,* NPNF, First Series, Vol. 12, Homily 28, 166; cf. PG 61.236D.

[98] He focuses on the role of the mind in helping us through our grief when he writes: "But if thou wilt trust sound reason with this grief, and wilt consider with thyself who hath taken him away, and that by nobly bearing it thou offerest thy mind as a sacrifice to our God, even this wave will not be too strong for thee to stem." Chrysostom, *Homilies on the Epistles to the Corinthians,* , NPNF, First Series, Vol. 12, *First Corinthians,* Homily 41, 253; cf. PG 61.360C. He accentuates the importance of identifying with those in sorrow in his homilies on Romans: "For there is nothing that ties love so firmly as sharing both joy and pain one with another. Do not then, because thou art far from difficulties thyself, remain aloof from sympathizing too." Chrysostom, *Homilies on the Acts of the Apostles and the Epistle to the Romans,* NPNF, First Series, Vol. 11, Homily 22, 507; cf. PG 60.610 A. An essential passage from Chrysostom's homilies on Acts shows his understanding of suffering is broader than Stoic categories: "Let us have a soul apt to sympathize (ψυχήν συμπαθητικὴν), let us have a heart that knows how to feel with others in their sorrows: no unmerciful temper, no inhumanity (ἀπάνθρωπον). Though thou be able to confer no relief, yet weep thou, groan, grieve over what has happened: even if this is not to no purpose." Ibid., Homily 23, 266; cf. PG 60.306B. "I am neither brutal nor cruel. I know that our nature asks and seeks for its friends and daily companions; it cannot but be grieved." Chrysostom, *Homilies on the Gospel of St. John and The Epistle to the Hebrews,* NPNF, First Series, Vol. 14, *The Gospel of St. John,* Homily 42, 231; cf. PG. 59.347D.

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effects of suffering are erased as a faithful disposition absorbs the realities of the gospel.

> This is our life, that is, the natural consequence of an apostolic way of life is to suffer countless evils. . . .so the apostolic life is purposely designed to suffer abuse, to suffer evils, to never have a respite, to never have a cessation of hostilities. And for however many are vigilant, they are not only not harmed by these events, but instead profit from them.[99]

Harmful suffering only occurs in the lives of those who consider indifferent matters as true evils, or who wilifully transgress God's moral order. That is to say, sin and harm are intrinsically connected. A key example of this process in *On Providence* is Herod Antipas. Even though John the Baptist is beheaded, it is Herod who reaps the bitter harvest of sin. Chrysostom invites his reader to "contemplate what it is likely Herod suffered" as he was reproved for his sins by a convicted prisoner.[100] Immediately after John's execution Herod's conscience is troubled "to such an extent that he believed John had been raised from the dead and was performing miracles. . . ."[101] The final outcome of events is that Herod is reproved by all

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[99] Chrysostom, *On Providence,* 20: 5-6. cf. SCh., *Sur la Prov.*, 20: 5-6, 246. The harmful effects of suffering dissolve in the light of faithful thinking and living. "Learn to think and live like a Christian, and you will not only not be harmed by any of these events, but will reap the greatest benefits." Ibid., 22: 10; cf. SCh., *Sur la Prov.*, 22: 10, 260.

[100] Ibid., 22: 3; cf. SCh., *Sur la Prov.*, 22: 3, 258.

[101] Ibid., 22: 8. cf. SCh., *Sur la Prov.*, 22: 8, 260.

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succeeding time, while John is crowned for his faithfulness. "Therefore, do not say: 'Why was John allowed to die?' For what occurred was not a death, but a crown, not an end, but the beginning of a greater life."[102]

The question that we must now address is this: If a proper disposition is the central element in both understanding and responding appropriately to the providence of God, how is such a disposition formed? Closely connected to this question is Chrysostom's explanation in *On Providence* of the different constituents that embody a Christian understanding of providence. For example, what can we expect to know? What are the limits of our knowledge of providence? What aspects of providence will remain incomprehensible?

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[102] Ibid., 22: 10; cf. SCh., *Sur la Prov.*, 22: 10, 260. For the Stoic background to Chrysostom's notion of sin as the only harmful suffering, cf. Edward Nowak, *Le Chrétien devant la Souffrance,* 82-88. cf. also Anne-Marie Malingrey's introduction to Chrysostom's *Lettres d'exil,* SCh., Tome 183, 23-26.

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The Incomprehensibility of God's Providence -- The Limits of Human Understanding and the Mysterious Reality of God

Much of our discussion thus far has emphasized the importance of maintaining a proper hermeneutical stance before the mystery of God's providence if one is to understand it correctly. In a sense, Chrysostom argues, *the manner in which we approach the problem* will ultimately determine whether one reaches the goal of comprehending how God is at work in history. Chrysostom clearly believes there is an appropriate and inappropriate way to seek for an understanding of God's providence. The sickness he is attempting to remedy can trace its source to a failure to understand and submit to the limitations and boundaries imposed by the nature of human reason and the character of God's providence.

> What, therefore, is the cause of such a sickness? A curious mind preoccupied with vain questions, one that wants to understand all the causes of everything that comes to pass and to strive contentiously with the incomprehensible and ineffable providence of God. It shamelessly scrutinizes and concerns itself with a subject which in its very nature is infinite and untraceable.[103]

There are two poles, then, to the problem Chrysostom wishes to address. On the one hand we have human reason. As Chrysostom indicates, it has a propensity for overstepping its limits, for asking the wrong questions, for

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[103] Ibid., 2: 1; cf. SCh., *Sur la Prov.*, 2: 1, 60.

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prying into areas it is unequipped to understand adequately. On the other hand, we have the character of God's providence, which remains essentially "infinite and untraceable."

Three principle word groups are employed by Chrysostom to describe the danger and futility of unbridled human reason, and we would do well to look at them in greater detail.

The first two word groups (περιεργάζω -- πολυπραγμονέω) are usually grouped together by Chrysostom and when coupled in this fashion most often have a negative connotation.[104] In *On Providence* Chrysostom enjoys using the περιεργάζω -- πολυπραγμονέω word group to describe the disposition of those who want to understand God's providence, but on their own terms.[105] He warns: "It is precarious and absolutely

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[104] cf. Anne-Marie Malingrey, SCh., *Sur la Prov.*, note 1, 60.

[105] Lampe provides the following definitions of περιεργάζω in its neutral and negative sense:

a. to exercise oneself about, be much concerned with.
b. to investigate.
c. to be inquisitive about, inquire into out of curiosity.
d. to meddle with, be a busybody about.
e. to pay attention to, be concerned about; cf. G.W.H. Lampe, *A Patristic Greek Lexicon*, Vol. 2, 1064.

Lampe defines the πολυπραγμονέω word group as follows (in its neutral or negative sense):

a. to be unduly concerned about, seek too eagerly.
b. to take unnecessary trouble over, deal with unnecessarily.
c. to be inquisitive about, inquire too inquisitively into, especially of matters beyond human understanding.

The noun πολυπραγμονία is defined as "inquisitiveness",

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insane to be unduly inquisitive (πολυπραγμονεῖν) and curious (περιεργάζεσθαι) about the unutterable wisdom of God."[106] He condemns a curious mind that "shamelessly scrutinizes (περιεργάζεσθαι) and concerns itself (πολυπραγμονεῖν) with the incomprehensible and ineffable providence of God."[107] Instead of prying into things, the one seeking after a knowledge of God's providence should be like clay in the potter's hands, "following wherever the artist leads, not resisting, not prying into things (μηδὲ περιεργαζόμενον)."[108] Again and again Chrysostom derides an inappropriately inquisitive attitude as audacious, insane, obstinate, foolish, improper, mad, impudent, shameless, bold, inappropriate, ignorant, indiscrete, arrogant, ridiculous, and curious.[109]

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while the adverb πολυπραγμονικῶς means "with over-eager curiosity"; cf. Ibid., 1118.

[106] Chrysostom, *On Providence*, 2: intro.; cf. SCh., *Sur la Prov.*, 2: intro., 60.

[107] Ibid., 2: 1; cf. SCh., *Sur la Prov.*, 2: 1, 60.

[108] Ibid., 2: 16; cf. SCh., *Sur la Prov.*, 2: 16, 70. Later he writes: "Rather, in questions concerning the plans and works of God, you yourself render the same kind of silence that characterizes clay before the potter." Ibid., 4: 17. cf. SCh., *Sur la Prov.*, 4: 17, 90. For other similar uses of the περιεργάζω -- πολυπραγμονέω word group, cf. *On Providence*, 4: 4, 10, 5: 1, 7: 26, 38, 8: 11, 13, 14, 9: 5, 10: 7, 16, 18, 44, 12: 1; cf. SCh., *Sur la Prov.*, 4: 4, 84, 4: 10, 86, 5: 1, 90, 7: 26, 122, 7: 38, 130, 8: 11, 140, 8: 13, 140, 8: 14, 142, 9: 5, 146, 10: 7, 154, 10: 16, 160, 10: 18, 162, 10: 44, 176, 12: 1, 182.

[109] Chrysostom frequently employs noun, adjectival and adverbial constructions to make his point. cf. *On Providence*, 3: 4, "desiring with such audacity to pry into" (μετὰ τοσαύτης περιεργάζεσθαι βουλόμενος τῆς ἰταμότητος), 3: 12, "put an end to this obstinacy" (Παῦσαι. . . . τῆς

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The third word group of importance for understanding Chrysostom's critique of human reason comes from the root σκὰνδαλ and encompasses the verb σκανδαλίζω and the noun σκάνδαλον.[110] It is the sense of σκανδαλίζω -- σκάνδαλον as a shock, hindrance, stumbling-block, or difficulty that is in the forefront of Chrysostom's thinking. *On Providence,* for example, is specifically written "to those troubled (τοὺς σκανδαλιζομένους) by the lawless deeds of recent days."[111] His aim as a physician of souls is "to heal not only one or two sick people, but all who are appalled (σκανδαλιζομένους) by the events occurring in the world."[112] In fact, the goal

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τοσαύτης φιλονεικίας), 4: 1, "foolish and insane beings" (τῶν ἀνοήτων καὶ μαινομένων), 4: 1, "improper judgment and mad opinion" (ἄκαιρον κρίσιν καὶ μανιώδη ψῆφον), 4: 4, "exceedingly bold and shameless" (σφόδρα τις ἰτιμὸς καὶ ἀναίσχυντος), 4: 9, "shameless curiosity" (περιεργίαν ἀναίσχυντον), 4: 10, "stop posing inappropriate questions" (Μὴ τοίνυν περιεργάζου, μηδὲ πολυπραγμόνει λογισμοῖς), 4: 10, "ignorant opinion" (ἀγνώμονι. . . .τῇ γνώμῃ), 8: 13, "Wouldn't this be an insane way to act, full of arrogance and madness?" (Πῶς γὰρ οὐ μανικὸν καὶ ἐσχάτης ἀπονοίας καὶ παραπληξίας ἀνάμεστον); cf. SCh., *Sur la Prov.*, 3: 4, 76, 3: 12, 80, 4: 1, 82, 4: 4, 84, 4: 9, 86, 4: 10, 86, 8: 13, 140.

[110] Lampe defines σκανδαλίζω as follows:

a. to cause to fall, to lead into sin, to tempt to or lure into sins against purity, to find a source of temptation in, to err.

b. to cause offence to, to shock, to hurt one's feelings.

σκάνδαλον is defined as:

a. an obstacle or obstruction.

b. metaphorically, as a hindrance, difficulty, offence, snare, and occasion of sin; cf. G.W.H. Lampe, *A Patristic Greek Lexicon*, Vol. 2, 1235.

[111] Chrysostom, *On Providence*, intro.; cf. SCh., *Sur la Prov.*, intro., 52.

[112] Ibid., intro., 2; cf. SCh., *Sur la Prov.*, intro., 2, 52.

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of *On Providence* is "to state the cause from which the scandal is generated" and to provide a framework for viewing God's providence which effectively overcomes the stumbling block it presents at first glance. That is to say, Chrysostom aims to provide his readers with epistemological spectacles that enhance their ability to see and understand how God is at work in the world at the present time. He firmly believes that if he can get them thinking the right way, the stumbling block (σκάνδαλον) will be eliminated, even though the difficult events which caused it in the first place still occur.[113]

The improper use of human reason, then, lies at the heart of humanity's struggle with God's providence. Chrysostom would not hesistate to say that its misuse is what creates the problem in the first place. In the realm of human suffering, providence, and the incomprehensible nature of God, human reason must be employed, *but only in an appropriate, wise, humble, and reverential manner.* Both

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[113] For other instances of the σκανδαλίζω -- σκάνδαλον word group in *On Providence*, cf. 1: 3, 4: 3, 9: 7, 10: 8, 10: 10-11, 10: 16-18, 10: 28, 10: 36, 10: 40, 10: 43, 11: 2, 11: 4-5, 12: 3, 12: 6-7, 13: intro., 14: intro., 14: 5-10, 14: 13, 14: 16-17, 15: 1-4, 15: 6-7, 17: 8, 17: 10, 18: 1, 19: 13, 20: 1, 20: 7-8, 22: intro., 22: 1, 24: 4, 24: 6; cf. SCh., *Sur la Prov.*, 1: 3, 56, 4: 3, 84, 9: 7, 148, 10: 8, 154, 10: 10-11, 156, 10: 16-18, 160, 162, 10: 28, 168, 10: 36, 172, 10: 40, 174, 10: 43, 176, 11: intro., 178, 11: 2, 178, 11: 4-5, 180, 12: 3, 184, 12: 6-7, 186, 13: intro., 188, 14: intro., 202, 14: 5-10, 204, 206, 208, 14: 13, 210, 14: 16-17, 210, 212, 15: intro., 214, 15: 1-4, 214, 216, 15: 6-7, 216, 218, 17: 8, 228, 17: 10, 228, 18: 1, 232, 19: 13, 242, 20: 1, 244, 20: 7-8, 246, 248, 22: intro., 256, 22: 1, 256, 24: 4, 274, 24: 6, 274.

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because of its own inherent limitations and weaknesses, and because of the infinite and incomprehensible nature of God and his working in creation, definite boundaries for human speculation must be observed. When these limits are transgressed, whether this be by refusing to accept the limitations of human reason or by ignoring or rejecting what God has revealed about his character and activity in Scripture or nature, the stumbling block of human suffering will again present itself.[114]

The series of homilies Chrysostom preached against the Anomoeans in Antioch during the first year of his priesthood prepared him well for his later work on the incomprehensibility of God's providence. Here Chrysostom confronted teaching which appeared to be both simple and entirely logical. As Paul Harkins explains, the argument of the Anomoeans went something like this:

a. God is essentially simple and one; unbegotten and not produced.

b. Therefore, no being can be God who is begotten or produced.

c. The conclusion? The Son cannot be of the same, of a

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[114] Edward Nowak argues that in *On Providence* Chrysostom's argument oscillates between two fixed points: first, the affirmation that humanity is endowed with an intelligence that can comprehend God's action in the world, and second, the confession of the limitation of this intelligence and the impossibility of its entering into a full understanding of the sense and motive of the divine action. Cf. Edward Nowak, *Le Chrétien devant la Souffrance*, 90.

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similar, or even of a like substance with the Father, "but must be dissimilar and unlike (*anomoios*) God."[115]

The gist of Chrysostom's response to the Anomoeans is built on a series of biblical texts which emphasize the necessarily limited range and ability of human reason in its efforts to understand the divine nature and God's providence. Harkins summarizes the first homily as an apt description of "how meager and mediocre human knowledge is and what madness it is for men to pretend they possess the fullness of the knowledge of God since God is incomprehensible to both men and angels."[116] The second homily in the series insists that the Anomoeans quest for a complete knowledge betrays a lack of trust in God and an inquisitive, curious nature. In an argument similar to one we find in *On Providence*, Chrysostom calls on the listener to imitate the attitude of the apostle Paul in his unwillingness to pry into God's providence. Other homilies in the series emphasize God's condescension in accomodating himself to human nature as he reveals himself, and that while such revelation is true it is also incomplete.[117] In *On Providence* Chrysostom shifts his focus

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[115] St. John Chrysostom, *On the Incomprehensible Nature of God*, translated by Paul W. Harkins, (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press), introduction, 18.

[116] Ibid., introduction, 24.

[117] Ibid., introduction, 24-26. Chrysostom minces no words:
"When you hear this, do you not weep for yourself, do you not bury yourself in the earth because you have lifted yourself to such a pitch of madness that you are playing the busybody and striving to meddle with God?. . . .Paul was a

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to God's actions in the world, but many of the central propositions of his argument remain the same.

It is this clash between finite human reason and an infinite, incomprehensible God that we must examine in greater detail. In chapter two of *On Providence,* Chrysostom commences his attack against unbridled human reason, that is, "a curious mind preoccupied with vain questions, one that wants to understand all the causes of everything that comes to pass and to strive contentiously with the incomprehensible and ineffable providence of God."[118] It refuses to acknowledge that it is dealing "with a subject which in its very nature is infinite and untraceable." Chrysostom presents the apostle Paul, on the other hand, as an illustrious example of one who retreated before the incomprehensible.[119] Paul, too, desired to investigate the depth and wonder of God's providence, but was "overcome by a kind of dizziness before the impossibility of ever explaining it."[120] He not only was unable to fathom God's

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man filled with abundant wisdom. When he looked at the incomparable excellence of God and the worthlessness of human nature, he grew vexed with those who were meddling with the way God was governing the world and he was so deeply displeased that he said: 'Man, who are you to answer God back?' Who are you? Ponder first your nature. In no way can anyone find a name which can express your nothingness." Ibid., Homily 2, 83.

[118] Chrysostom, *On Providence*, 2: 1; cf. SCh., *Sur la Prov.*, 2: 1, 60.

[119] Ibid., 2: 3; cf. SCh., *Sur la Prov.*, 2: 3, 62.

[120] Ibid., 2: 6; cf. SCh., *Sur la Prov.*, 2: 6, 62.

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judgments, but was unable to "even commence an effective inquiry."

Why? We "lack the capability of reaching their end."[121] God's knowledge is "boundless," his judgments are "unsearchable," his ways are "inscrutable," his gift is "indescribable," and his peace "surpasses all understanding."[122] This is not to say that reason is to be sidestepped or ignored. It is to assert, however, that the quest for complete or full knowledge is "madness and folly," precisely because human reason is finite and inherently weak. It is not designed to be able to encompass or comprehend knowledge of an infinite nature.

> For the prophets continually evoke all these figures of speech to illustrate the difference between human nature and the divine nature. They compete with one another in demonstrating the inferiority of our nature. But the one you expose to your insatiable curiosity is indestructible, unchanging, always exists and exists in the same manner, without beginning, without end, unfathomable, surpassing human thought, challenging false ideas, inexpressible, indescribable, incomprehensible, not only to me, you, prophets and apostles, but even to the powers above, who are pure, invisible, incorporeal, and dwell continuously in heaven.[123]

Once the finiteness and weakness of human reason is acknowledged, though, the door is opened for a greater receptivity to what God has chosen to reveal about himself.

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[121] Ibid., 2: 7; cf. SCh., *Sur la Prov.*, 2: 7, 64.

[122] Ibid., 2: 11; cf. SCh., *Sur la Prov.*, 2: 11, 66.

[123] Ibid., 2: 18; cf. SCh., *Sur la Prov.*, 2: 18, 70, 72.

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God reveals himself to human reason, as human reason responds in faith. "Rather, you have received the greater part of the knowledge of these matters from above, because this knowledge is too immense to be grasped by your understanding."[124] We see this same emphasis on a humble stance of faith before God's providence as the path to understanding in a sermon Chrysostom preached at Antioch during the episcopate of Flavian, more than twenty years before he penned *On Providence.* As we respond in faith to the little we can comprehend, we gain a greater insight into the larger whole.

> And if any of the events which happen pass our understanding (τὴν διάνοιαν ὑπερβαῖνον τὴν ἡμετέραν), let us not from this consider that our affairs are not governed by providence, but perceiving His providence in part, in things incomprehensible let us yield to the unsearchableness of His wisdom (ἐν τοῖς ακαταλήπτοις παραχωρῶμεν αὐτοῦ τῷ ἀναξιχνιάστῳ τῆς σοφίας). For if it is not possible for one not conversant with it to understand a man's art, much rather is it impossible for the human understanding to comprehend the infinity of the providence of God (τῆς τοῦ θεοῦ προνοίας τὸ ἄπειρον). . . .But nevertheless from small portions we gain a clear and manifest faith about the whole, we give thanks to him for all that happens.[125]

Chrysostom's reasoning and illustration is quite similar to the example of the physician he employs in chapter eight of *On Providence.* There he argues that his

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[124] Ibid., 3: 11; cf. SCh., *Sur la Prov.*, 3: 11, 78, 80.

[125] Chrysostom, *Three Homilies Concerning the Power of Demons*, NPNF, First Series, Vol. 9, Homily 1, 186; cf. PG 49.256D-257A.

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readers are willing to submit to the surgeon's knife and bitter prescriptions because they have a keen awareness of their own ignorance and inexperience in such matters and of the surgeon's training and knowledge. His point is that if it is ridiculous for ignorant and inexperienced people to question the physician or artisan, it is even more foolish and arrogant "to seek after the why and wherefore of what has come to be, recognizing clearly that this wisdom is infallible, that his goodness is boundless, that his providence is inexpressible. . . .and not to await the final outcome of all that comes to pass".[126] The character of God, i.e., his boundless wisdom, goodness, and knowledge, is linked with an eschatological perspective of hope to provide a proper framework for the exercise of reason.

Chrysostom reiterates this principle in chapter nine of *On Providence.* In his introduction to this chapter he writes it "is not necessary to curiously inquire into the meaning of events. Rather, we should await their final outcome."[127] He then uses a number of illustrations to exhort his readers to "wait for the final outcome and consider how things will turn out. Don't be troubled or disturbed at the outset."[128] If people uninformed about the purification of

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[126] Chrysostom, *On Providence*, 8: 14; cf. SCh., *Sur la Prov.*, 8: 14, 142.

[127] Ibid., 9: intro.; cf. SCh., *Sur la Prov.*, 9: intro., 144.

[128] Ibid., 9: 1; cf. SCh., *Sur la Prov.*, 9: 1, 144.

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metals should see a goldsmith at work, would they not think the gold was destroyed as it was melted with ashes and chaff? If someone born and raised on the ocean were suddenly transported to land and saw a farmer cultivating his land, casting seed into the muddy earth, "wouldn't he think the wheat was soon to be destroyed? Wouldn't he pass judgment on the farmer for treating it this way?"[129] His condemnation of the farmer, though, arises from his own "inexperience and folly," and not "from the nature of what had been done." The observer has issued "a premature opinion," without waiting for the final outcome of events. Chrysostom's conclusion? ". . . .above all stop meddling in the affairs of our common Master of all things. But if you are so contentious and bold as to act in such an insane fashion, *wait for the outcome of events* (τὸ τέλος ἀνάμεινον τῶν γινομένων)" (my emphasis).[130] If the farmer can wait an entire winter, focusing his attention on the coming harvest and not on what the seed is suffering in the ground, so can believers learn to focus on the final outcome of their own time of cultivation in this present life. It is the final objective of glory in heaven that will provide the needed perspective toward God's work in our lives while we are on earth.

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[129] Ibid., 9: 1-2; cf. SCh., *Sur la Prov.*, 9: 1-2, 144.

[130] Ibid., 9: 5; cf. SCh., *Sur la Prov.*, 9: 5, 146.

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> That is to say, the plan of God has reference to the single outcome of each of these two lives, our salvation and our glory. If it is divided in two by time, it is united by the final objective. . . . Therefore, when you see the Church scattered, suffering the most terrible trials, her most illustrious members persecuted and flogged, her leader carried away into exile, don't only consider these events, but also the things which have resulted: the rewards, the recompense, the awards for the athlete who wins in the games and the prizes won in the contest.[131]

Again, it must be emphasized that Chrysostom's argument is not predicated solely on the difference between the finite and infinite. Other factors come into play, such as the love and goodness of God and the eschatological hope of a future resolution of all unanswered questions and apparent or real injustices. Indeed, we can confidently submit the use of our reason to the framework God has created for its exercise precisely because we know that God is infinitely loving and good and can be trusted in the areas of existence which at present remain blurred and inexplicable. The boundaries for theological reflection, then, are founded on God's character and the trusting human response to what he has accomplished in nature and history, and to what God promises to consummate in the future. Because we know that God loves us and acts in infinite goodness towards us, we can trust him in this present in-between time. Because God often acts in the present in light of long term goals, goals often not apparent in the context of this life alone, we can

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[131] Ibid., 9: 5-6; cf. SCh., *Sur la Prov.*, 9: 5-6, 146, 148.

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bear our sufferings nobly and faithfully.[132]

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[132] Both themes are apparent in Chrysostom's homily on the paralytic let down through the roof. "Knowing therefore that God is more tenderly loving (φιλοστοργότερος) than all physicians, do not inquire too curiously (μὴ περιεργάζου) concerning His treatment nor demand an account of it from Him, but whether He is pleased to let us go free or whether He punishes, let us offer ourselves for either alike; for He seeks by means of each to lead us back to health, and to communion with Himself, and He knows our several needs, and what is expedient for each one, and how and in what manner we ought to be saved, and along what path He leads us. Let us then follow whithersoever He bids us, and let us not too carefully consider whether He commands us to go by a smooth and easy path, or by a difficult and rugged one. . . ." Chrysostom, "*On the paralytic let down through the roof: and concerning the equality of the divine Father and the Son*," NPNF, First Series, Vol. 9, 212; cf. PG 51.51A.

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Nature as a Source of Information and Insight into God's Providence

Near the beginning of *On Providence* Chrysostom writes that he is "concocting this treatment, not only by drawing from the Divine Scriptures, but also from the events which occur in this present life and which continually take place."[133] He does so because he realizes that there are some people "who do not pay attention to the Scriptures" who can still benefit from what he has to teach, "if only they are willing."[134] He will aim to reach them through the lessons offered through this life's events and through God's providence as seen in nature.

This is not to say that Chrysostom ignores or downplays the message of nature for those who also accept the authority of Scripture. In fact, he contends that the judgment God has proclaimed in Scripture concerning nature is the primary grid one must utilize to avoid misunderstanding God's creation. Nature in itself contains aspects which are quite clearly beneficial to humanity, and elements which are more difficult to reconcile with God's love and goodness.

> That is to say, among those things which God viewed were not only light, but also darkness. Not only

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[133] Ibid., 1: 4; cf. SCh., *Sur la Prov.*, 1: 4, 56.

[134] Ibid., 1: 5; cf. SCh., *Sur la Prov.*, 1: 5, 58.

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> fruit, but also thorns. Not only cultivated trees, but also wild trees. Not only sloping plains, but also poisonous reptiles. Not only fish, but also sea monsters. Not only calm seas, but also the unnavigable ocean. . . . Many were soon to be troubled by these realities and heresies born.[135]

Chrysostom exhorts those readers who do accept the Scripture's authority to play close heed to God's own declaration concerning creation: "God saw everything which he made, and behold, it was very good." If God, the one who has created all things, does not hesitate to label all creation "good," this is also the stance his believing community is to assume, even before those aspects of nature that appear to be destructive or harmful.

> Therefore, having heard the prophet say to you that God saw these things and praised them, stop trying to find another test and demonstration of their goodness. Don't ask: 'In what way are they good?' For the declaration of the opinion and judgment of the one who created them is more certain than the demonstration drawn from the works themselves. . . .For if you're

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[135] Ibid., 4: 2-3; cf. SCh., *Sur la Prov.*, 4: 2-3, 82-84. Chrysostom preaches almost the identical message in his homilies on Genesis; cf. Chrysostom, *Homilies on Genesis*, (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1986), 136; cf. PG 53.87B. There he argues, as here, that heresies are born when we refuse to accept God's judgment concerning the goodness of creation. "When we see people of good reputation giving their opinion of things that happen, we don't contradict them, but rather fall in with their opinion and often prefer their opinion to our own. So much the more in the case of the God of all things, the Creator of everything we can see, should we do likewise: we should learn his judgement on things, subdue our own reasonings, and instead of presuming further we should be content with the knowledge that everything has been produced by a word coming from him and by his loving kindness, and that nothing has been created idly or to no purpose. Even if, through the limitations of our own reasoning, we should be in ignorance of created things, he himself in his own wisdom and thoughtful love produced all things." Ibid., 137; cf. PG 53.88A.

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> not satisfied with this word, but want to occupy yourself with a detailed investigation of creation, you're only flinging yourself into a violent tide of evil reasonings and billows creating a great tempest.[136]

Great care must be taken in interpreting Chrysostom at this juncture. He is painting in broad strokes, and we will misunderstand him if we believe him to be saying that the Christian should avoid close observation and examination of the natural realm. His own insights into the natural world demonstrate both a fascination with nature and a willingness to hypothesize how it functions. In his *Homilies on the Statues*, for example, he doesn't hesitate to argue that God delayed in giving humanity the Scriptures because the revelation from nature was clear and sufficient.[137]

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[136] Ibid., 4: 7, 10; cf. SCh., *Sur la Prov.*, 4: 7, 10, 84, 86.

[137] He writes: "And if so useful, for what reason, say they, were they (the Scriptures) not delivered to us from the beginning? It was because God was desirous of instructing the nature of man, not by letters, but by things. . . .By means of the Creation itself (Διὰ τῆς κτίσεως αὐτῆς). . . .For when thou seest the beauty, the breadth, the height, the position, the form, the stability thereof during so long a period; hearing as it were a voice, and being instructed by the spectacle, thou adornest Him who created a body so fair and strange! *The heavens may be silent, but the sight of them emits a voice, that is louder than a trumpet's sound; instructing us not by the ear, but through the medium of the eyes;* for the latter is a sense which is more sure and more distinct than the former" (my emphasis). Chrysostom, *Homilies on the Statues*, NPNF, First Series, Vol. 9, Homily 9, 401; cf. PG 49.105B-105D, 106A. His close observation of the natural world is apparent when he writes: "For the spider also labours, and toils, and spreads out his fine textures over the walls, surpassing the utmost skill of woman. . . .Imitate the ass in his love to his master, and the ox also!. . . .for great, great indeed is the advantage that may be gained from irrational creatures for the correction of manners." Ibid., Homily 12, 420; cf. PG 49.120D-121A.

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Chrysostom does believe, however, that God's own declaration concerning the goodness of creation must not be sidestepped. A humble, reverent, trusting attitude before God's declaration will lead to an exploration and enjoyment of creation, but not to a renewed questioning of its goodness. The "evil reasonings" he warns against are engendered by an unbelieving desire to obtain a greater knowledge and insight than is possible at present. Human reason's own weakness must be acknowledged, along with the limitations it imposes. Greeks, on the one hand, are exaggerated in their praise of creation, worshiping it as a god, while groups such as the Manichaeans deride created matter as evil.[138] Both error in presuming autonomous human reason is capable of making a valid, cogent judgment about the inherent goodness or evil of creation. This presumption leads to no new knowledge and produces a premature and ignorant slandering of the natural world.[139]

Chrysostom's warnings about the misuse of reason, however, don't prevent him from inviting his more skeptical readers to take a close look at the created order. In fact, the longest chapter in *On Providence* is a specific attempt to demonstrate God's provident goodness from nature to those who still doubt this very thing.[140] He appears to be annoyed

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[138] Ibid., 4: 11; cf. SCh., *Sur la Prov.*, 4: 11, 88.

[139] Ibid., 4: 10; cf. SCh., *Sur la Prov.*, 4: 10, 86.

[140] Ibid, 7: 1-39; cf. SCh., *Sur la Prov.*, 7: 1-39, 108,

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that he has to conduct such an exercise, relating it to the "worldly," "self-willed," and "utterly carnal" nature of at least some of his readers,[141] but still plainly believes that God's providence in nature is plain for all to see. All he asks of his audience is a willingness to listen.

> For God's providence is as plain as the sun and its rays. In each situation and place, in the wilderness, in inhabited regions and uninhabited, on earth or sea or wherever you might go, you will observe the clear and sufficient, ancient and new, reminders of this providence; voices which speak more clearly than our rational voice and are conveyed from all places, teaching those willing to listen about his constant concern.[142]

Chrysostom begins by delineating the goodness of God's providence in "the visible elements of creation." He first observes that "this praiseworthy and all-harmonious creation was created for no one else but you."[143] Angels had no need of creation. They existed before it ever came into being. Instead, creation was produced for the sake of humanity, and its various characteristics were specifically designed to meet our varied needs and to elicit our praise for its creator.[144]

The stars, sun, and moon, for example, are both

110, 112, 114, 116, 118, 120, 122, 124, 126, 128, 130.

[141] Ibid., 7: 1; cf. SCh., *Sur la Prov.*, 7: 1, 108.

[142] Ibid., 5: 2; cf. SCh., *Sur la Prov.*, 5: 2, 92.

[143] Ibid., 7: 2; cf. SCh., *Sur la Prov.*, 7: 2, 108.

[144] Ibid., 7: 3-4; cf. SCh., *Sur la Prov.*, 7: 3-4, 110.

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beautiful and useful. They are faithful guides for those who must travel on land and sea, and also are useful for determining the time of day and the change of the season. As they mark off the significant cycles of the year, people are able to organize their lives in a prudent fashion. Utility and delight flow together.[145] The sun opens the day with the beauty of the sunrise and also provides the light and heat needed for almost every aspect of nature's function and health.[146]

Chrysostom moves on to describe other witnesses to God's providence in nature. In a single sentence he blends together the benefits of both animate and inanimate aspects of creation, and unhesitatingly groups readily identifiable goods with characteristics one would likely view as harmful.

> One learns of providence from tamed and untamed animals, from savage beasts and those accustomed to human touch, from both small animals and large, from the birds which appear in the winter, summer, and autumn, from four-footed creatures, fish, plants and herbs, from those which are active in the night and those which are lively during the day, from the rains, from the passing of time, from death, from life, from the hard work which is our lot, from despondency, from relaxation. . . .[147]

What is at first glance puzzling is that Chrysostom speaks of creation as possessing dark or rough elements *as*

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[145] Ibid., 7: 4-12; cf. SCh., *Sur la Prov.*, 7: 4-12, 110, 112, 114.

[146] Ibid., 7: 14-16; cf. SCh., *Sur la Prov.*, 7: 14-16, 114, 116.

[147] Ibid., 7: 18-19; cf. SCh., *Sur la Prov.*, 7: 18-19, 118.

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created by God, and not simply as a result of a post-Fall distortion. While we can learn of God's providence from certain post-Fall characteristics, such as death or despondency, Chrysostom indicates that the created order God designates as good in its pre-Fall state contained darkness as well as light, wild trees as well as cultivated ones, ravines as well as plains, poisonous reptiles as well as human beings, sea monsters as well as fish.[148] Nature in its pre-Fall state demonstrates a wildness that God considers good, an untamed face that can be dangerous, much as a live wire is lethal if treated in a careless manner.

In what way, though, are these characteristics "good?" Chrysostom directly addresses this question in his homilies on Genesis. He frames his response by first reminding his readers that God had called all of the created order "good." Even sea monsters? Yes, Chrysostom replies, and adds, "although you stand in ignorance of the reason for the created things, don't presume to find fault with their creation."[149] The "well disposed" person will humbly observe the epistemological boundaries God has dictated, boundaries framed by his love and power.

> I mean, if you were well disposed (εὐγνώμων) you would be able from the creation of these things to get an insight into the power of your Lord and his ineffable love (τὴν ἄφατον φιλανθρωπίαν) -- his power, for the

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[148] Ibid., 4: 2; cf. SCh., *Sur la Prov.*, 4: 2, 82.

[149] Chrysostom, *Homilies on Genesis,* Homily 7, 97; cf. PG 53. 65D.

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> reason that he caused living beings like this to be created from the waters by his word and command, and his love (φιλανθρωπίαν), for the reason that in creating them he gave each of them a particular place, and assigned them a boundless area of the sea so that they might not hinder one another but dwell in the waters and provide an example to teach us the Creator's extraordinary power and cause no harm to the human race.[150]

God, Chrysostom preaches, demonstrates a certain "prodigality," creating some things for the benefit of humanity, and producing others simply so that his power might be proclaimed and glorified. Reptiles and wild beasts are products of this prodigality, aspects of the abundance of God's creation, an abundance meant to "overwhelm" us and teach us "that all these things were produced by a certain wisdom and ineffable love out of regard for the human being that was destined to come into being."[151] God is at work creating the world that is most appropriate for the spiritual and material well-being of humanity. Certain characteristics of creation will be readily identified as beneficial. The benefits of other aspects will remain beyond our grasp.[152] This mystery should not lead, however,

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[150] Ibid., 98; cf. PG 53.65D-66A.

[151] Ibid., 99; cf. PG 53.66D.

[152] Chrysostom notes that while not all trees are fruitbearing, they still provide "a remarkable service" and "contribute to our well-being; we make our houses from them and gain many other advantages contributing to our well-being." cf. PG 53.67B. Even poisonous reptiles are a gift of love. "I mean, physicians get from them many things which they employ as medications capable of promoting the health of our bodies." Ibid., 100; cf. PG 53.67B. Still, Chrysostom reminds his hearers that "when reasoning fails and the intellect proves inadequate, call to your mind the

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to skepticism, but rather be gratefully accepted as an occasion for praise.

Chrysostom's overall perspective can be further clarified in light of his earlier sermons preached on the occasion of the tax riots in Antioch in 388 A.D. These sermons illustrate many of the same principles that Chrysostom develops in *On Providence* over 15 years later. In homily 10 Chrysostom avers that God's goodness and the goodness of creation is demonstrated in both its beauty and its weakness. How so? God was able to foresee humanity's fall into sin and tendency to make an idol out of the created order.

> For God, foreseeing these things of old, destroyed, in His wisdom, this plea of theirs. On this account He made the world not only wonderful and vast, but also corruptible and perishable (φθαρτὸν καὶ ἐπίκηρον); and placed therein many evidences of its weakness (ἀσθενείας). . . .For it was made corruptible by the command of God. But God so commanded it for the sake of our race; for since it was to nurture a corruptible man, it was necessary itself should also be of the same character; for of course corruptible bodies were not to dwell in an incorruptible creation.[153]

Creation's goodness, then, is a functional goodness, one that reflects God's infinite love for humanity and desire to create an environment purposely designed to

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greatness of the Lord, especially from the fact that his power is such that we fail to understand precisely the meaning of the things made by him. *This is the attitude of sensible minds and sober hearts* (τοῦτο διανοίας εὐγνώμονος, τοῦτο ψυχῆς νηφούσης)" (my emphasis). Ibid., 101-102; cf. PG 53.68AB.

[153] Chrysostom, *Homilies on the Statues,* Homily 10, NPNF, First Series, Vol. 9, 409, 411; cf. PG 49.115B, 117D-118A.

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cultivate a human being's awareness of God and love for him. The natural world is given to humanity as a gift, filled with grace, in the sense that it is the ideal natural surrounding for human beings as created in the image of God to grow, develop, and exercise the responsibilities given to them by God.[154] In fact, Chrysostom defines the image of God in humanity as the control and authority God gives human beings over all things on earth.[155] Adam is placed in the garden of Eden, an environment specifically designed by God to communicate to him his love and care. Even in his life there, however, a life described by Chrysostom as one of "freedom and great affluence,"[156] he still has specific responsibilities to perform. Adam is to till the garden. This work, though "painless and without difficulty," would

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[154] Chrysostom compares humanity to a king who must wait for his palace to be prepared for him. "Let me draw a comparison with a king on the point of entering a city on a visit: his bodyguard has to be sent on ahead to have the palace in readiness, and thus the king may enter his palace. Well now, in just the same way in this case the Creator, as though on the point of installing some king and ruler over everything on earth, first erected the whole of this scenery, and then brought forth the one destined to preside over it, showing us through the created things themselves what importance he gave to this creature." Chrysostom, *Homilies on Genesis*, Homily 8, 107; cf. PG 53.71B.

[155] He writes: "So 'image' refers to the matter of control, not anything else, in other words, God created the human being as having control of everything on earth, and nothing on earth is greater than the human being, under whose authority everything falls." Ibid., 110; cf. PG 53.72D. This gift of authority is a sign of God's love and esteem for humanity. cf. Ibid., Homily 10, 134; cf. PG 53.86B.

[156] Ibid., Homily 13, 177; cf. PG 53.109D.

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keep him from falling into "indulgence" and "sloth" and would develop in him "a better frame of mind." Chrysostom pictures God as a loving father "who prevents his young child from being unsettled by great relaxation and freedom from care by devising some slight responsibility appropriate to the situation. . . ."[157] These tasks will be a "stabilizing influence" in Adam's life, preventing him "from overstepping the limit."[158]

Whatever possible harmful aspects of creation can be avoided as humanity freely chooses to respond in faith, a thought quite similar to Chrysostom's argument that nothing can harm the person who does not harm himself. Here Chrysostom's thought coincides well with the general Greek patristic consensus on the meaning of creation and its relationship to humanity.

Irenaeus, for example, continually insists that Adam and Eve were not created as perfect human beings, but rather as infants who were to grow and mature while they interacted in faithful dependence upon their creator as they lived within the world God had given them. God, "who made the things of time for man," designed the created order as the arena in which this growth could take place, "so that coming to maturity in them, he may produce the fruit of

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[157] Ibid., Homily 14, 185; cf. PG 53.113D-114A.

[158] Ibid., 185; cf. PG 53.114A.

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immortality. . . ."[159] God creates both the world and humanity itself as grace-filled realities, where human beings as the image of God are purposely designed to participate in God and to freely choose to respond to him. As Chrysostom might put it, God's creation is eminently good because it is the ideal environment for humanity to pursue its vocation. The darker aspects of creation, such as cliffs, poisonous reptiles, and unnavigable oceans, function within God's providence to accomplish his purpose for the center of creation, men and women created in the image of God.[160] Hence, the refrain throughout *On Providence* that the natural world and the events of daily life were produced "for no one else but you."[161]

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[159] Irenaeus, *Against Heresies,* ANF, Vol. 1, 466.

[160] John Meyendorff argues that the view of humanity prevalent in the Christian East is based on the idea of participation in God. A human being is not "an autonomous, or self-sufficient, being; his very *nature* is truly itself only inasmuch as it exists 'in God' or 'in grace.'" Grace, then, is specifically given to aid a human being in his "natural development." Nature and grace are not in opposition, but rather "express a dynamic, living, and necessary relationship between God and man, different by their *natures*, but in *communion* with each other through God's energy, or grace." Meyendorff reflects both Irenaeus and Chrysostom when he writes that humanity's participation in God is not a "static givenness", but rather "a challenge, and man is called to *grow* in divine life. Divine life is a gift, but also a task which is to be accomplished by a free human effort." John Meyendorff, *Byzantine Theology,* (New York: Fordham University Press, 1974), 138-139. Chrysostom might well add that God in his providence faithfully and continually provides the arena for the challenging growth God calls us to in his grace and love.

[161] Chrysostom, *On Providence,* 7: 2, 22, 24, 31; cf. SCh., *Sur la Prov.*, 7: 2, 108, 7: 22, 120, 7: 24, 122, 7: 31, 124.

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> And all these things, Friend, are for your sake -- arts and crafts for you, life's pursuits and activities, cities, villages, sleep for you, death for your sake, life for your sake, growth, so many works of nature and such a magnificent world in its present state for you, a world that will be even better in the future for your sake.[162]

As we have touched upon in mentioning Chrysostom's description of the benefits of the stars, sun, and moon, he delights in demonstrating the benefits of nature for humanity, and finds evidence for God's providence from a wide variety of witnesses. Again, some are immediately identifiable as good, regardless of one's theological stance, and others are recognized as such when seen within the broader boundaries of God's purposes and designs for humanity. For example, we learn of God's providence from reptiles, birds, various forms of plant life, domesticated animals, and the seasons of the year. Even the most ordinary events point to a wise and loving creator. "For what is smaller and more ugly than the bee? And what is more ordinary than ants and cicadas? Nevertheless, even these emit a clear voice concerning the providence, power,

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[162] Ibid., 7: 33; cf. SCh., *Sur la Prov.*, 7: 33, 126. In a moving passage from Chrysostom's homilies on Genesis he states: "I mean, even if pagans shout and scream a thousand times, I will proclaim it from the housetops that all these things were created for the human race, since the Creator is sufficient of himself and needed none of them; instead, it was to show his love for us that he created them all, demonstrating the great regard he has for the human race, and it was for us to move from these creatures to bring to him a proper adoration." Chrysostom, *Homilies on Genesis*, Homily 6, 88; cf. PG 53.60D.

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and wisdom of God."[163]

More harsh realities also demonstrate the providence of God. Savage beasts, death, despondency, and sickness are all tools that God uses to form human character and to bridle unruly passions that would blur the understanding and distract one from the true purpose of life. That is to say, God uses pain and suffering to refocus our attention and help us to rearrange priorities that too often reflect a stunted, self-centered perspective.[164]

One is reminded of a key argument C.S. Lewis employs in *The Problem of Pain.* Lewis contends that God's goodness and love is different from mere kindness, i.e., letting us do whatever we want to do as long as we are happy. As Lewis puts it, kindness is contained in love, but they are not the same thing.

> Kindness, merely as such, cares not whether its object becomes good or bad, provided only that it escapes suffering. . . .It is for people whom we care nothing about that we demand happiness on any terms: with our friends, our lovers, our children, we are exacting and would rather see them suffer much than be happy in contemptible and estranging modes. If God is love, He is, by definition, something more than mere kindness.[165]

Instead, God's goodness seeks our best and in love acts to make us what we were made to be. "We are, not

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[163] Ibid., 7: 20; cf. SCh., *Sur la Prov.*, 7: 20, 120.

[164] Ibid., 7: 18, 19, 20, 34; cf. SCh., *Sur la Prov.*, 7: 18, 118, 7: 19, 118, 7: 20, 118, 7: 34, 128.

[165] C.S. Lewis, *The Problem of Pain*, (New York: Macmillan Publishing Co., Inc., 1962), 40-41.

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metaphorically but in very truth, a Divine work of art, something that God is making, and therefore something with which He will not be satisfied until it has a certain character."[166] Lewis's point is that the reconciliation of human suffering with divine love is insoluable only "as long as we attach a trivial meaning to the word 'love.'"[167] If we are, indeed, loved by a righteous God who has created us and cannot tolerate the stain or wrinkle of sin, his actions in our lives which sometimes cause us pain make more sense. We will be most happy in the place God has made for us as creatures in relationship with him and to bring us there he has to work out the kinks and remove the spots.

> What we would here and now call our 'happiness' is not the end God chiefly has in view: but when we are such as He can love without impediment, we shall in fact be happy. . . . Rather, God is the only good of all creatures: and by necessity, each must find its good in that kind and degree of the fruition of God which is proper to its nature.[168]

Pain becomes the means God employs to bring a wayward creature to its senses. ". . . .pain insists upon being attended to. God whispers to us in our pleasures, speaks in our conscience, but shouts in our pains: it is His megaphone

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[166] Ibid., 42.

[167] Ibid., 47.

[168] Ibid., 48, 53.

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to rouse a deaf world."[169] One can hear Chrysostom shouting "Amen!" God in his providence does allow pain and suffering to occur, but each occurrence is enfolded in God's love and goodness, themes we now need to explore more deeply.

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[169] Ibid., 93.

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The Love and Goodness of God as a Fundamental Presupposition for all God's Actions

Perhaps some readers are bristling at the direction Chrysostom's thought has taken us. Especially in our modern age, there is a desire to remain on the outside of the problem we are discussing, to maintain a certain critical distance from the object of our inquiry. Modern discussions of the problem of providence and suffering, such as that of Richard Rubenstein, take an inductive approach. That is to say, the evidence is first inductively weighed and then a decision is made about the viability of the traditional presentations of the character of God. For Rubenstein, as we have seen, modern realities such as Auschwitz ipso facto refute an understanding of God as omnipotent and loving. In his thinking, the horror of modern genocidal events and the traditional theistic viewpoint cannot be reconciled.

By now it should be clear that Chrysostom's approach takes the opposite methodological tack. It is deductive rather than inductive. Certain revealed truths, whether these be in nature, Scripture, or history, are accepted as fundamental presuppositions for a correct understanding of providence. Primary among these fundamentals is the reality of God's love for humanity. While Rubenstein questions God's love in light of modern horrors, Chrysostom argues that "well-disposed" people, that is, those who willingly place themselves within the context God has framed for

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understanding how he works, will recognize "not only his providence, but also his fervent love toward us" as they enter into the world of scriptural testimony.[170]

Chrysostom insists that God's providence is neither mechanistic nor distant. "For he does not simply watch over us, but also loves us; he ardently loves us with an inexplicable love, with a impassible yet fervent, vigorous, genuine, indissoluble love, a love that is impossible to extinguish."[171] God's impassibility and fervent love are not mutually exclusive. Rather, as G.L. Prestige explains, impassibility guarantees the consistency of all God's attitudes and actions toward humanity. While the passions that plague fallen people cause their love to weaken or disappear as circumstances change, God's moral transcendence remains above "the forces and passions such as commonly hold sway in the creation and among mankind."[172]

> It is clear that impassibility means not that God is inactive or uninterested, not that He surveys existence with Epicurean impassivity from the shelter of a metaphysical insulation, but that His will is determined from within instead of being swayed from without. It safeguards the truth that the impulse alike in providential order and in redemption and sanctification comes from the will of God.[173]

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[170] Chrysostom, *On Providence*, 6: 1; cf. SCh., *Sur la Prov.*, 6: 1, 94.

[171] Ibid., 6: 1; cf. SCh., *Sur la Prov.*, 6: 1, 94.

[172] G.L. Prestige, *God in Patristic Thought*, (London: Hollen Street Press, 1952), 6.

[173] Ibid., 7.

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Hence, Chrysostom readily describes God's love as both impassible and fervent. God has committed himself to act toward us in love. He longs for us to realize that whatever he does or allows to happen is couched in love and that his own changeless character prevents him from acting in any other manner.[174]

Chrysostom devotes extended sections of *On Providence* to a discussion of the many comparisons utilized in Scripture to illustrate the love of God. Though he has frequently warned his readers to beware of misusing their reason, he now openly invites them to contemplate the examples God has chosen to illustrate his own love. The human comparison, then, is meant to be a spring board for reason's own immersion in the wonder of the divine love.[175]

Chrysostom uses the example of parental love to make his point. He knows his readers, especially in the time of

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[174] Chrysostom illustrates the difference between *passion* and *tenderness* in an illuminating passage from his *Exhortation to Theodore After His Fall* and highlights the pastoral implications. "For if the wrath of God were a passion (πάθος), one might well despair as being unable to quench the flame which he had kindled by so many evil doings; but since the Divine nature is passionless (ἀπαθὲς), even if He punishes, even if He takes vengeance, he does this not with wrath, but with *tender care, and much lovingkindness* (κηδημονίας καὶ φιλανθρωπίας πολλῆς); wherefore it behoves us to be of much good courage, and to trust in the power of repentance. . . .He acts with a view to our advantage, and to prevent our perverseness becoming worse by our making a practice of despising and neglecting Him" (my emphasis). Chrysostom, *An Exhortation to Theodore After His Fall*, NPNF, First Series, Vol. 9, Letter 1, 93; cf. PG 47.281D.

[175] Chrysostom, *On Providence*, 6: 2; cf. SCh., *Sur la Prov.*, 6: 2, 94, 96.

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persecution they and he are now experiencing, will be tempted to feel abandoned by God. Could this truly be the case? The prophets have already shown this to be an impossible scenario. Isaiah has written: "Will a woman forget her child or not have pity on the offspring of her womb?"[176] The lesson to be learned? "The prophet says this to make the point that just as a woman would not forget her own children, so neither would God forget humankind."[177]

Chrysostom exhorts his readers, however, not to limit their reflection to the level of the comparison. The interface between the human comparison and the love of God is insufficient in itself to communicate the incomparible reality of the divine love. We must meditatively exercise our reason to move beyond.[178]

> Do you see how the degree of God's love exceeds that of a mother? In order that you might see how God's love super abundantly transcends the warm affection of a mother and the love of a father for their children. . . .As great as is the difference between light and darkness, between evil and goodness, so great is the difference between the goodness and providence of God in comparison to the tender love of a father.[179]

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[176] Isaiah 49: 14-15.

[177] Chrysostom, *On Providence*, 6: 3; cf. SCh., *Sur la Prov.*, 6: 3, 96.

[178] Chrysostom writes: "I have given these examples so that when I introduce other illustrations you wouldn't limit your thinking to the measure of what is spoken by the prophets, *but having this rule you should use your reason to go even further and see the unspeakable excess of the love of God*" (my emphasis)." Chrysostom, *On Providence*, 6: 8; cf. SCh., *Sur la Prov.*, 6: 8, 98.

[179] Ibid., 6: 5-6; cf. SCh., *Sur la Prov.*, 6: 5-6, 96,

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One senses Chrysostom's own frustration with the limitations of human language to express the divine reality. He knows the issue at hand is a strategic one. If he can convince his readers of God's love for them despite their painful and tragic circumstances, the road will be paved for a clear and broad understanding of providence. If he fails at this juncture, the other planks in his presentation will be irreparably damaged. To further make his case, he goes on to other illustrations drawn from Scripture.

David, for example, compares God's love to the distance

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between heaven and earth.[180] Hosea speaks of the care with which God communicates his distress over Israel's spiritual adultery, fearing that in some way he would grieve his beloved.[181] Jonah's distress over the gourd that withered in the sun is overshadowed by the depth of God's concern over the plight of the Ninevites.[182] Isaiah rebukes those who would question God's loving control of history.[183] Chrysostom's purpose in referring to these key texts is to focus on one central affirmation: God loves humanity with an infinite, unchanging love, a love which "differs from all these (illustrations) as much as evil differs from goodness."[184]

> He speaks this way, not so you would think his love to be something human -- I will not stop saying the same things over again -- but that through these images you might discern the warmth, genuineness, excess, and fire of his love.[185]

A number of implications for our understanding of providence can be derived from Chrysostom's presentation.

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[180] Ibid., 6: 10; cf. SCh., *Sur la Prov.*, 6: 10, 98, 100.

[181] Ibid., 6: 12-13; cf. SCh., *Sur la Prov.*, 6: 12-13, 100.

[182] Ibid., 6: 16-19; cf. SCh., *Sur la Prov.*, 6: 16-19, 102, 104.

[183] Ibid., 6: 20; cf. SCh., *Sur la Prov.*, 6: 20, 104.

[184] Ibid., 6: 22; cf. SCh., *Sur la Prov.*, 6: 22, 106.

[185] Ibid., 6: 14; cf. SCh., *Sur la Prov.*, 6: 14, 102.

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First and foremost, the love of God for us must be a primary grid for interpreting the hard data of our lives. God allows sickness to strike or an accident to take place. Does this occurrence indicate that God doesn't love us or has lost control of history? No, Chrysostom insists. Because God's love is accepted as a fundamental presupposition whatever interpretation we give to the data of our lives, no matter how inexplicable or harsh our circumstances might be, must be framed within the context divine love dictates.

It is at this juncture, however, that confusion reigns supreme. Why? Largely because *our conception and judgment of how love and goodness would or should act in a given instance* is limited both by our scanty knowledge of the broader circumstances involved in any given event, and by our general conception of love and goodness itself. In our section on Chrysostom's understanding of incomprehensibility we have already discussed the epistemological basis for a humble stance before God's providence. The events of our lives will always possess a certain inexplicable character simply because our knowledge of the broader issues is extremely restricted.

A faulty conception of God's love and goodness is also a serious road block in comprehending providence. We have seen, for example, in C.S. Lewis's comments how a faulty conception of the nature of love and its operations cripples

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our understanding of our own suffering. As he argues, if we attach a trivial meaning to the word love and define it as simply "happiness" confusion will abound.

The same could be said of God's goodness. Frequently the question is asked, "How could a good God allow this to happen?" An understanding of God's goodness will elicit two responses: first, God has embraced our suffering in the incarnation of his Son, an idea we will soon develop. Second, how God's goodness and love manifest themselves in this present in-between time is predicated on the goal God has in mind for his creation. If, as both Chrysostom and Lewis point out, all God's purposes for humanity could be summed up in the word "contentment," most of us would remain happy indeed.[186] We long for a God who will meet our needs as we define them, but who will also leave us alone, to ourselves and our own devices. But this is exactly what the divine love will not do. God discerns our illness even though we believe we are healthy, and will take whatever steps necessary to intervene on our behalf. These steps

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[186] Lewis writes: ". . . .by Love, in this context, most of us mean kindness -- the desire to see others than the self happy; not happy in this way or in that, but just happy. What would really satisfy us would be a God who said of anything we happened to like doing, 'What does it matter so long as they are contented?' We want, in fact, not so much a Father in Heaven as a grandfather in heaven -- a senile benevolence who, as they say, 'liked to see young people enjoying themselves,' and whose plan for the universe was simply that it might be truly said at the end of each day, 'a good day was had by all.'" C.S. Lewis, *The Problem of Pain*, 40.

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often involve pain, just as the lance of the surgeon's knife and the aftermath of the surgery entail suffering. The ultimate outcome is health, restoration, and maturity, the very goals God is pursuing in history through his providential actions. Divine love, then, will often be a painful love, one Chrysostom describes as fiery, precisely because the disease it is acting to heal can only be conquered through pain and death. Hence, the incarnation and cross become fundamental paradigms for understanding how God's love and goodness are presently operative in history.[187]

> Because he was not satisfied with the instruction from nature which brings the knowledge of God -- since many people out of their own ignorance derived no benefit from this -- he opened up other pathways to this knowledge; at last he accomplished the foremost of his kindnesses. He sent his own Son.[188]

What are the significant components of Chrysostom's understanding of the incarnation and cross of Christ *as they relate to his overall comprehension of providence and human suffering?*

Chrysostom emphasizes that God in Christ has willingly and deliberately identified with humanity in our sufferings

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[187] In a homily on Paul's epistle to the Philippians, Chrysostom strikingly illustrates the connection between the disease of sin and the incarnation: "But what does he do? As a most excellent physician, He prepareth medicines of great price, and Himself tastes them first." Chrysostom, *Homilies on Philippians*, NPNF, First Series, Vol. 13, Homily 11, 238; cf. PG 62.269D.

[188] Chrysostom, *On Providence*, 8: 5; cf. SCh., *Sur la Prov.*, 8: 5, 134.

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and has experienced these sufferings as his own. "The one who is of the same nature as God *becomes what I am. . . .*" my emphasis).[189] "For he himself passed through all these things and shared in them with you."[190] Chrysostom plainly considers this to be a foundational truth, and emphasizes it in his attack against groups such as the Manichaeans who undercut the reality of the incarnation:

> . . . .just as He hungered, as He slept, as He felt fatigue, as He ate and drank, so also did He deprecate death, thereby *manifesting his humanity, and that infirmity of human nature which does not submit without pain to be torn from this present life* (τὸ ἀνθρώπινον ἐνδεικνύμενος, καὶ τὴν ἀσθένειαν τῆς φύσεως τὴν οὐκ ἐνεχομένην ἀπαθῶς ἀπορῥαγῆναι τῆς παρούσης ζωῆς). For had he not uttered any of these things, it might have been said that if He were a man He ought to have experienced human feelings. And what are these? in the case of one about to crucified, fear and agony, and pain in being torn from present life: for a sense of the charm which surrounds present things is implanted in human nature: on this account wishing to prove the reality of the fleshly clothing, and to give assurance of the incarnation He manifests the actual feelings of man with full demonstration.[191]

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[189] Ibid., 8: 6; cf. SCh., *Sur la Prov.*, 8: 6, 134, 136.

[190] Ibid., 8: 8; cf. SCh., *Sur la Prov.*, 8: 8, 138.

[191] Chrysostom, *Homily on the Passage, "Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me, and against Marcionists and Manichaeans*, NPNF, First Series, Vol. 9, 205; cf. PG 51.38A. Chrysostom consistently argues that to fear death is a natural and fitting response. Christ's experience in Gethsemane "greatly shows His humanity, and a nature unwilling to die, but clinging to this present life, proving that He was not exempt from human feelings. For as it is no blame to be hungry, or to sleep, so neither is it to desire the present life; and Christ indeed had a body pure from sin, yet not free from natural wants, for then it would not have been a body." Chrysostom, *Homilies on the Gospel of St. John and the Epistle to the Hebrews*, NPNF,

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Two immediate implications can be drawn. First, Christ will never ask his disciple to endure something he has not first undergone himself. Indeed, because Christ has already walked this path, we can know we will stand the journey. Second, fellowship with Christ and suffering with Christ are mutually intertwined. For the Christian, Chrysostom avers, suffering is not a sign of God's rejection, but rather an invitation to fellowship as God refines our character.[192]

> But whoso is in affliction and temptation, this man standeth near to Him, whoso is journeying on the narrow way. *For He Himself trode this;* whence too He saith, "the Son of Man hath not where to lay His head." *So then grieve not when thou art in affliction; considering with Whom thou hast fellowship, and how thou art purified by trials; and how great gain is thine* (my emphasis).[193]

Fellowship with Christ in our sufferings not only leads

First Series, Vol. 14, *Homilies on the Gospel of John,* Homily 67, 249; cf. PG 59.371D.

[192] Augustine also emphasizes the interconnection between Christ's sufferings and our own, focusing on the reality of the mystical fellowship between Christ and his body. In his commentary on Psalm 62 Augustine writes: "For whatever he has suffered we too have suffered with him, and what we suffer he too suffers with us. If the head suffers in any way, how can the hand assert that it does not suffer? If the hand suffers, how can the head say that it does not suffer? If the foot feels something, how can the head say that it does not feel it too?. . . .whatever his Church suffers by way of this life's tribulations, temptations, constrictions and deprivations (for she must be schooled to be purified like gold in the fire), this he also suffers." Augustine, Commentary on Psalm 62:2, in *Divine Providence and Human Suffering*, James Walsh and P.G. Walsh, Message of the Fathers of the Church, Vol. 17, 175; cf. CCL 39.794.

[193] Chrysostom, *Homilies on Second Corinthians*, NPNF, First Series, Vol. 12, Homily 1, 274; cf. PG 61.387D-388A.

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to encouragement, but also trains us in how to respond to adverse circumstances, especially as we imitate his own responses. "For he himself passed through all these things and shared in them with you. . . .*training and teaching you* not to be anxious about any of these trials" (my emphasis).[194] Christ dies on the cross "that you might learn endurance, that you might be trained in patience, that none of the things of the present life might distress you. . . ."[195] This pattern is reduplicated in the apostle Paul's own life and in the lives of those who observed his sufferings. Suffering, fellowship, imitation, and courage in tribulation as the final fruit are the consistent pattern.

> Do you see the courage? Do you recognize the boldness? Do you perceive the spiritual perspective of a Christian? The Philippians saw their teacher in prison, wrapped in chains, throttled, hit hard, and suffering a thousand hardships; not only were they not shocked or troubled, but they acquired an even greater zeal. The sufferings of their teacher fueled their own progress in the conflict.[196]

A great reversal occurs as in the incarnation and cross of Christ circumstances and actions normally scorned and rejected are welcomed, patterned, and emulated by his disciples. Chrysostom develops this theme in his *Homilies*

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[194] Chrysostom, *On Providence*, 8: 8; cf. SCh., *Sur la Prov.*, 8: 8, 138.

[195] Ibid., 8: 7; cf. SCh., *Sur la Prov.*, 8: 7, 136, 138.

[196] Ibid., 14 :6; cf. SCh., *Sur la Prov.*, 14: 6, 204, 206.

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on the Statues when he states that though Paul's chains were made of iron "they contained the grace of the Spirit." Though objects such as chains and the cross were once thought to be abominations, they have now become "symbols of salvation." Those means which were thought to be vehicles of death and destruction actually are avenues by which the grace of God is "kindled."[197]

Chrysostom delights in the way the cross and incarnation have turned the values of the world upside down.[198] As Chrysostom teaches in his homilies on Second Timothy, *the cause* of our suffering, and its goal and objective, play a key role in this value reversal.

> For in themselves death and imprisonment and chains are matters of shame and reproach. *But when the cause is added before us, and the mystery viewed aright*, they will appear full of dignity, and matter for boasting. For it was that death which saved the world, when it was perishing. That death connected earth with heaven, that death destroyed the power of the devil,

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[197] Chrysostom, *Homilies on the Statues*, NPNF, First Series, Vol. 9, Homily 16, 447-448; cf. PG 49.165D. In referring to the chains of Paul Chrysostom states: "For not so splendid does the diadem make a royal head, as the chain his hands; not owing to their proper nature, but owing to the grace that darted brightness on them." Chrysostom, *Concerning Lowliness of Mind; and Commentary on Philippians* 1: 18, NPNF, First Series, Vol. 9, 152; cf. PG 51.317B.

[198] In his homilies on 1 Corinthians Chrysostom stresses the incongruity of the cross as a sign of God's action: ". . . .for the Cross has not merely no appearance of being a sign sought out by reasoning, but even the very annihilation of a sign; -- is not merely deemed no proof of power, but a conviction of weakness; -- not merely no display of wisdom, but a suggestion of foolishness." Chrysostom, *Homilies on First Corinthians*, NPNF, First Series, Vol. 12, Homily 4, 18; cf. PG 61.33D.

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> and made men angels, and sons of God: that death raised our nature to the kingly throne (my emphasis).[199]

Out of seeming defeat, disgrace, suffering, and the reality of death comes unimaginable victory. In chapter eight of *On Providence*, a key chapter in Chrysostom's teaching on the reversal produced by the incarnation and cross, he first lists the suffering Christ endured on our behalf, and then the surprising and unexpected fruit his suffering and death bore: Christ was "nailed to a high cross, bound, thrashed with sticks, struck on the face, ridiculed, buried through kindness, and seals were placed upon his tomb."[200] The story seems over. And yet through what had appeared to be unmitigated tragedy and injustice humanity and creation are healed. The sovereignty of sin is broken, the citadel of the devil demolished, the cords of death cut, heaven's gates opened, the curse overturned, the Holy Spirit sent, apostles chosen and commissioned, and an entirely new way of life introduced on earth.[201]

It is essential that we grasp the centrality of the cross in Chrysostom's thought as a fundamental paradigm for understanding God's broader work in providence.[202] In the

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[199] Chrysostom, *Homilies on Second Timothy*, NPNF, First Series, Vol. 13, Homily 2, 480; cf. PG 62.607B-C.

[200] Ibid., 8: 7; cf. SCh., 8: 7, 136.

[201] Ibid., 8: 7-8, 15: 1; cf. SCh., 8: 7-8, 136-138, 15: 1, 214.

[202] It should come as no surprise that Chrysostom

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cross all the major themes of his presentation intersect. For example, Chrysostom's stress on the role of disposition in discerning God's providence is illustrated in the different responses of people to the crucifixion of Jesus. "How many stumbled over the cross of our Master (Πόσοι τῷ σταυρῷ αὐτοῦ. . . .ἐσκανδαλίσθησαν) -- a cross shared by all of us -- and became even more lawless and insolent?"[203] The crowd surrounding the cross judges by appearances. Only if Christ delivers himself from these sufferings will they believe. *Because they lack the disposition to see God at work*, they misinterpret his greatest act on their behalf.

The thief, on the other hand, is lifted beyond mere human speculations "by the winds of faith." He meditates "on the things of the future," confesses his sin, and ponders the resurrection. This broader perspective, Chrysostom contends, is the result of a teachable and humble disposition formed by the thief's response to the grace of God. God's grace gives him eyes to see and ears to hear the

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stresses the great reversal the cross introduces into history in his instructions to new Christians: "Dost thou not know what great result the cross has achieved? It has abolished death, has extinguished sin, has made Hades useless, has undone the power of the devil, and is it not worth trusting for the health of the body? *It has raised up the whole world, and dost thou not take courage in it?*" (my emphasis) Chrysostom, *Instructions to Catechumens*, NPNF, First Series, Vol. 9, Second Instruction, 171; cf. PG 49.240B.

[203] Chrysostom, *On Providence*, 14: 8; cf. SCh., *Sur la Prov.*, 14: 8, 206.

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message represented in the cross as he himself dies an excruciating death.

> You see, then, that the senseless and negligent gain nothing from the things which are beneficial. Those, however, who have a right disposition and are vigilant derive a tremendous profit from those things which scandalize others.[204]

A vigilant and humble disposition is intimately linked to an awareness that nothing in this world can harm the person who is joined to the realities Christ has introduced into history through his death and resurrection. The stumbling block of the cross "does not arise from the nature of the cross, but rather from the folly of those who are scandalized."[205]

The heart of Chrysostom's argument is that if what *appeared* to be the greatest tragedy in the history of the world *is actually* the most blessed event, Christians can have an entirely different perspective on the circumstances of their own lives. The cross is "the foremost good," "a proof of God's great providence, goodness, and love."[206] The primary paradigm of the cross, then, becomes the pattern on which Christians are to mold both their own understanding of

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[204] Ibid., 14: 13; cf. SCh., *Sur la Prov.*, 14: 13, 208, 210.

[205] Ibid., 15: 4. "Τὸ γὰρ σκάνδαλον οὐ παρὰ τὴν φύσιν τοῦ σταυροῦ γέγονεν, ἀλλὰ παρὰ τὴν ἄνοιαν τῶν σκανδαλιζομένων." SCh., *Sur la Prov.*, 15: 4, 216.

[206] Ibid., 15: intro., 17: intro.; cf. SCh., *Sur la Prov.*, 15: intro., 214, 17: intro., 224.

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God's providence at work in their lives and of how his love and goodness manifest themselves in this present in-between time. Chrysostom would be quick to add, however, that our present situation must also be interpreted in light of God's ultimate goal for human history. The *present* must be viewed in light of the *end* and premature opinions avoided. Chrysostom's eschatological hope now demands our closer attention.

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Eschatological Hope and Judgment as an Essential Element in an Adequate Understanding of Providence and Human Suffering

Chrysostom's understanding of providence is unashamedly founded on the principle that the purpose and goal of human life surpasses our present experience. In fact, he speaks of God's plan as having reference to "each of these two lives, our salvation and our glory. If it is divided in two by time, it is united by the final objective."[207] This division between the present and the future provides an essential grid for any adequate understanding of providence and its relationship to human affairs.

First, Chrysostom contends that human knowledge *in its present state* is extremely limited. At present, as Paul writes, "if anyone thinks he knows something, he does not yet know as he ought to know."[208]

> He goes on to demonstrate that our present knowledge is grossly deficient and that complete knowledge is reserved for the age to come. Only a very small amount has been given to us at the present time.[209]

When "the perfect comes, the partial will be done away,"[210]

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[207] Ibid., 9: 5; cf. SCh., *Sur la Prov.*, 9: 5, 146.

[208] 1 Cor. 8: 2

[209] Chrysostom, *On Providence*, 2: 13; cf. SCh., *Sur la Prov.*, 2: 13, 68.

[210] 1 Cor. 13: 9-10

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but until that time "the distance between this present knowledge and that of the future" will remain great and much is still to be revealed.[211]

God, however, has not left humanity in the lurch. What he has already accomplished in history and what he promises to consummate in the future provides us with a sufficient though incomplete knowledge that should both assuage our fears and curb our inquisitiveness. "Therefore, recognizing all the things through which he has revealed himself, *through which he has acted and will act*, don't indiscretely inquire into things, nor be unduly concerned. . . ." (my emphasis)[212]

On the one hand, we have the inscrutible side of God's wisdom and providence, an aspect Chrysostom describes as "indescribable," "ineffable, inexpressible, and incomprehensible."[213] On the other hand, its incomprehensibility does not cloud either its wonder or its promise for the future. God's character and promise are the guarantee "that in every circumstance all things that come to us from him have a favorable outcome -- provided that our

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[211] Chrysostom, *On Providence*, 2: 14; cf. SCh., *Sur la Prov.*, 2: 14, 68.

[212] Ibid., 8: 13; cf. SCh., *Sur la Prov.*, 8: 13, 140.

[213] Ibid., 8: 14; cf. SCh., *Sur la Prov.*, 8: 14, 142.

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own activities don't get in the way."[214] The prudent and wise course is to await the final outcome of events.

> Above all, one should not inquire too inquisitively, neither at the beginning of events nor at their conclusion. But if you are so curious and unduly inquisitive, wait for the final outcome and consider how things will turn out. Don't be troubled or disturbed at the outset.[215]

Chrysostom drives home this point with numerous examples and illustrations. As we have noted in our discussion of the incomprehensibility of God's providence, a person unfamiliar with the goldsmith's trade would surely believe the gold was destroyed as it was melted down. One ignorant of the farmer's methods would prematurely believe the seed to be destroyed as he saw it covered with mud. ". . . .he would be greatly amazed that through such difficult circumstances the fruit had been brought to such an appearance and lustre."[216] Chrysostom's point is that if one must wait for the goldsmith or farmer to finish his task before a knowledgeable opinion can be given concerning success or failure, how much more so "before the one who cultivates the entire world and our own souls."[217]

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[214] Ibid., 8: 14; cf. SCh., *Sur la Prov.*, 8: 14, 142.

[215] Ibid., 9: 1; cf. SCh., *Sur la Prov.*, 9: 1, 144.

[216] Ibid., 9: 1-4; cf. SCh., *Sur la Prov.*, 9: 1-4, 144, 146.

[217] Ibid., 9: 5; cf. SCh., *Sur la Prov.*, 9: 5, 146.

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Chrysostom illustrates this principle by drawing from the experience of great saints such as Abraham and Joseph. The bond binding together Abraham and Joseph is their perspective on *both the resourcefulness of God and the time framework for his work*. Abraham "understood the nature of the promise of God, its resourcefulness and richness, that it is not hindered by the laws of nature, nor the inherent difficulty of circumstances. . . ."[218] Abraham's humble and receptive disposition, vibrant faith, and broad perspective enable him to see God at work, even when adverse events occur or commands contrary to the promise are given. He glorifies God by not worrying unduly "about the how and wherefore of the promise" and instead yields "to the incomprehensibility of his providence."[219]

Abraham knows God possesses the power to fulfill the promise in the future, even if present circumstances seem dark.

> Instead, he again fled for refuge to the power of the one who made the promise -- a power that is indescribable, resourceful, ingenious, a power that manifests itself in contrary circumstances, is mightier than any opposition, is not limited by the laws of nature, and admits no obstacle.[220]

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[218] Ibid., 10: 3; cf. SCh., *Sur la Prov.*, 10: 3, 152.

[219] Ibid., 10: 7; cf. SCh., *Sur la Prov.*, 10: 7, 154.

[220] Ibid., 10: 12; cf. SCh., *Sur la Prov.*, 10: 12, 158.

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If Abraham had been unable to wait for the final outcome, if he had insisted on curiously demanding an explanation from God whenever he couldn't figure out the rationale for God's actions, "his faith would soon have been crippled."[221]

Joseph reflects the same pattern. Again, "the events which were occurring after the visions were contrary to the dreams."[222] Joseph, however, "was awaiting the final outcome of events, knowing full well the resourcefulness of God and the ingenuity of his wisdom."[223]

The examples of Abraham and Joseph are meant to teach Chrysostom's readers that the "realization of the promises did not occur immediately."[224] Whether it be the time of the Patriarchs in the Old Testament, the troubling events concerning the statues in the late fourth century, or Chrysostom's own exile at the end of his life, his perspective remains the same. A fainthearted or weak faith "originates from no other source than from a refusal to yield to the incomprehensible providence of God and a desire

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[221] Ibid., 10: 16; cf. SCh., *Sur la Prov.*, 10: 16, 160. Chrysostom writes that Abraham "regarded 'invisible things' as much more clear than 'visible things' because of the promise of God. This was evidence of a fully devoted faith." Ibid., 13: 4; cf. SCh., *Sur la Prov.*, 13: 4, 190.

[222] Ibid., 10: 19; cf. SCh., *Sur la Prov.*, 10: 19, 162.

[223] Ibid., 10: 40; cf. SCh., *Sur la Prov.*, 10: 40, 174.

[224] Ibid., 11: intro.; cf. SCh., *Sur la Prov.*, 11: intro., 178.

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to seek after the why or wherefore of his plans."[225] A noble and vigilant faith takes the future into account. Because its outlook is strengthened by a faith designed for the long haul, it withstands the adversities of this present life without being shaken.[226]

Chrysostom does more, however, than simply linking epistemology to eschatology. He is utterly convinced of the reality of future rewards and punishment, and freely incorporates the actuality of heaven and hell into his understanding of providence. Faithfulness in this life, especially in the midst of adverse circumstances, will be richly rewarded. Even though God's providence remains in many ways incomprensible and inexpressible, so too is the blessedness in store for the future.

> For your sake, Friend, he prepared a kingdom; for your sake indescribable good things, that portion which is in heaven, distinctive and manifold dwelling places, that blessedness which cannot be adequately spelled out by any human expression.[227]

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[225] Ibid., 10: 16; cf. SCh., 10: 16, 160.

[226] The continuity in Chrysostom's thought is remarkable. In his homilies on the statues he writes: "For this too is a thing in which it behoves the Christian to differ from the unbelievers, the bearing all things nobly, and *through hope of the future*, soaring above the attack of human evils" (my emphasis). Chrysostom, *The Homilies on the Statues to the People of Antioch*, NPNF, First Series, Vol. 9, Homily 2, 346; cf. PG 49.37C. "He who is nourished with good hopes, *and is confident respecting things to come*, hath already tasted of the kingdom! For nothing ordinarily so repairs the soul, and makes a man better, as a good hope of things to come" (my emphasis). Ibid., 350; cf. PG 49.42A.

[227] Chrysostom, *On Providence*, 8: 9; cf. SCh., *Sur la*

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We cannot stress too strongly that Chrysostom's overall argument will remain inexplicable to the reader unless his conviction regarding the future is treated with seriousness. As a pastor he has witnessed the scattering of his flock and experienced tremendous personal suffering. His life is drawing to a close. It is at these crucial junctures that one's bedrock beliefs come to the fore, and hence Chrysostom's insistence that these particular events be comprehended in light of the future is that much more significant.

> Therefore, when you see the Church scattered, suffering the most terrible trials, her most illustrious members persecuted and flogged, her leader carried away into exile, *don't only consider these events, but also the things which have resulted: the rewards, the recompense, the awards of the athlete who wins in the games and the prizes won in the contest* (my emphasis).[228]

In many ways Chrysostom is echoing Paul's words in 1 Corinthians 15. There Paul contends that "If only for this life we have hope in Christ, we are to be pitied more than all."[229] Rather, "If the dead are not raised, 'Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die."[230] Chrysostom makes the same

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Prov., 8: 9, 138.

[228] Ibid., 9: 6; cf. SCh., *Sur la Prov.*, 9: 6, 148.

[229] 1 Cor. 15: 19.

[230] 1 Cor. 15: 31.

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point in his homilies on 2 Thessalonians.

> Unless somewhat of things future had excited us, unless we had been persuaded that there is a good hope, we should not have been filled with the more alacrity by suffering. For who would have chosen for the sake of what we have here to endure so many sufferings, and to live a life of anxiety, and full of dangers?[231]

Our perception of God's providence will remain clouded, though, as long as we live as though this present life encompasses all of reality, and believe that fulfillment must come now if it is to come at all. "There is nothing we refuse to undergo" in order to obtain honor in this life, Chrysostom preaches in his homilies on Colossians, while we are reluctant to invest in the future, largely because we hold it in little esteem.[232] This limited perspective has surely turned things upside down. The future, Chrysostom argues, must dictate how we live in the present, and the interpretation we give to the events God allows us to experience.

Rewards and the life of heaven are not the only aspect of the future that shape Chrysostom's thought. He also has a keen awareness of future judgment and punishment. While those who suffer in this life "are beloved, praised, admired, proclaimed, and crowned by those who know them and

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[231] Chrysostom, *Homilies on Thessalonians*, NPNF, First Series, Homily 2, 329; cf. PG 62.401C.

[232] Chrysostom, *Homilies on Colossians*, NPNF, First Series, Vol. 13, Homily 8, 299; cf. PG 62.358D-359A.

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those who don't," those guilty of persecuting and plotting against Christ's church face certain judgment. They are like wild, unreasoning beasts, who even though they have received a death blow, continue to thrash about savagely. Their conscience, though, remains intact, convicting them of their evil deeds and leaving them trembling and fearful.[233] Not only does their conscience bear witness against them, but other people "hate them, accuse them, reproach them, convict them, dishonor them, curse them with countless imprecations, and long to see them in punishment and retribution."[234]

We see this process at work in the relationship between Herod and John the Baptist. A first glance might leave one with the impression that Herod has triumphed. John is beheaded. Herod has apparently solved his problem and the coast is clear to marry his brother's wife. And yet, Chrysostom asks, "Who is the one who is blessed by all? Who is the one who arouses our envy? Who is proclaimed? Who is crowned? Who is lauded? Who is praised?"[235] John, even though his journey on earth has drawn to a close, still lives in heaven and in the praises of the church.

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[233] Chrysostom, *On Providence*, 24: 1-2; cf. SCh., *Sur la Prov.*, 24: 1-2, 272.

[234] Ibid., 24: 3; cf. SCh., *Sur la Prov.*, 24: 3, 274.

[235] Ibid., 22: 6; cf. SCh., *Sur la Prov.*, 22: 6, 258.

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". . . .does not one shout every day in the Church: "It is not lawful for you to have the wife of Philip your brother?"[236] Herod, on the other hand, is denounced in his own time and in the memory of the church from that point on. His conscience also bears witness against him.

> As for John, he immediately inspired fear in Herod after his murder -- for *fear was disturbing his conscience* to such an extent that he believed John had been raised from the dead and was performing miracles -- and in our own day and through all succeeding time, throughout all the world he refutes him through himself and through others (my emphasis).[237]

John is in no way harmed by these events. "For what occurred was not a death, but a crown, not an end, but the beginning of a greater life."[238] Herod meets a dreary end, and is assured of final judgment before God's tribunal. Not only he, but all who have struggled against God's kingdom face a fearful future.

> But what kind of account should one present of things above? If one who has caused only a single person to stumble is sentenced to such a severe punishment that it would have been better for a millstone to be hung around his neck and cast into the sea, contemplate how great a punishment these will suffer before that fearful tribunal, how great a retribution they will submit to -- those who did everything within their power to trouble the whole world, who overturned so many churches, who warred against so great a peace,

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[236] Ibid., 22: 7; cf. SCh., *Sur la Prov.*, 22: 7, 258.

[237] Ibid., 22: 8; cf. SCh., *Sur la Prov.*, 22: 8, 260.

[238] Ibid., 22: 10; cf. SCh., *Sur la Prov.*, 22: 10, 260, 262.

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who laid countless stumbling blocks everywhere.[239]

Chrysostom takes the reality of hell seriously, and minces no words in describing its horror. In his homilies on Romans, for example, he urges his listeners to make hell a frequent topic of conversation. Hell's reality, Chrysostom argues, will make the pains and evils of this present world seem a small thing, and the world's pleasures mere trifles. "For what would you tell me was an evil? poverty? disease? captivity? maiming of the body? Why all these things are sport compared to the punishment there. . . ."[240] To speak rather anachronistically, one can imagine Jonathan Edwards sitting in Chrysostom's audience and voicing his approval! Both preachers labored to bring the reality of hell alive for their audiences, not out of a morbid or sadistic bent of mind, but because they firmly believed in its existence and feared lest any should finally taste of its reality. "Let us then continually employ ourselves with talking about these things. *For to remember hell prevents our falling into hell.*"[241]

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[239] Ibid., 24: 4; cf. SCh., *Sur la Prov.*, 24: 4, 274.

[240] Chrysostom, *Homilies on Romans*, NPNF, First Series, Vol. 11, Homily 31, 558; cf. PG 60.674A.

[241] Ibid., 558; cf. PG 60.674B; cf. also Chrysostom, *Homilies on First and Second Corinthians*, NPNF, First Series, Vol. 12, *Second Corinthians*, Homily 10, 330; cf. PG 61.472D. In his homilies on 1 Timothy he writes: "The stream of fire is boiling up, the flame is kindled, and we are laughing, taking our pleasure, and sinning without fear. No one even bears in mind that Day. No one considers that

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Chrysostom's view of the future, then, clearly influences his attitude toward this present life. He knows his readers are in danger of losing heart. The church has been scattered. Persecution is rampant. Families are breaking apart. Only a perspective that includes the future within its boundaries will be broad enough to encompass these trying times without breaking under their pressure.

> . . . .the true life and the trustworthy and unchanging realities await us in the future. For the circumstances and events of the present life have the character of a journey, but the realities of the future life await us in our true homeland.[242]

If this is indeed true, if this present life is a "journey," if God's goal for us reaches fulfillment in a life we have yet to experience, what are the lessons God is trying to teach us now? The character of God's providence and of our own experience and circumstances will take on greater clarity as we delve deeper into the nature of our present time. That is to say, *our expectations for how God's providence will manifest itself in our lives must*

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present things are passing away, and that they are but temporal, though events are every day crying out and uttering a fearful voice. The untimely deaths, the changes that take place in our lives, our own infirmities and diseases, fail to instruct us. And not only in our own bodies are these changes visible, but in the elements themselves." Chrysostom, *Homilies on First and Second Timothy*, NPNF, First Series, Vol. 13, *First Timothy,* Homily 15, 462; cf. PG 62.583D-584A.

[242] Chrysostom, *On Providence*, 11: 3; cf. SCh., *Sur la Prov.*, 11: 3, 180.

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be predicated on God's goals for this in-between time, not our own. Pilgrims on a journey will interpret the terrain differently than settlers who are striving to set up a permanent residence. Attitudes toward trials, priorities, possessions, and even time will all be affected accordingly.[243]

For the present, Christ has called us to adopt the mode of the traveller, but promises to accompany us on our journey as a fellow traveller and exile.[244] Though we might well encounter difficulties on the road to our final destination, Chrysostom insists it is the person who tries

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[243] In Chrysostom's homilies on Ephesians he reflects on the foolishness of making a large house the center of one's dreams: "But as to us, let us not be insatiable. . . . let us not be seeking out for splendid houses; for we are on our pilgrimage, not at home; so that if there be any that knows that the present life is a sort of journey, and expedition, and, as one might say, it is what they call an entrenched camp, he will not be seeking for splendid buildings. For who, tell me, be he ever so rich, would choose to build a splendid house in an encampment?. . . .The present life is nothing else than a march and an encampment." Chrysostom, *Homilies on Ephesians*, NPNF, First Series, Vol. 13, Homily 23, 166; cf. PG 62.168B; cf. Chrysostom, *Homilies on the Gospel of St. John and The Epistle to the Hebrews*, NPNF, First Series, Vol. 14, *Homilies on the Gospel of John,* Homily 79, 293; cf. PG 59.429D-430A; cf. also Chrysostom, *The Homilies on the Statues to the People of Antioch*, NPNF, First Series, Vol. 9, Homily 17, 457; cf. PG 49.177D-178A.

[244] Chrysostom comments that St. Ignatius understood this truth better than the devil. "The Devil. . . .not knowing that having Jesus with him, as a fellow traveller, and fellow exile on so long a journey, he rather became the stronger, and afforded more proof of the power that was with him, and to a greater degree knit the Churches together." Chrysostom, *Homilies on S. Ignatius and S. Babylas*, NPNF, First Series, Vol. 9, 138; cf. PG 50.592C-D.

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to set up permanent residence here who ultimately experiences disaster.[245]

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[245] Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, for example, were carried off to a foreign land and yet "were not harmed at all," while "those who remained in their homes, enjoying all the good things of their homeland, stumbled and were condemned." Chrysostom, *On Providence,* 11: 5; cf. SCh., *Sur la Prov.*, 11: 5, 180. The arch schemer Eutropius is the perfect example of the tragedy that can befall those who fail to see that life is a journey. Shortly before his execution, while he was still taking refuge in Chrysostom's church in Constantinople, Chrysostom addressed him with these poignant words: "Dost thou not know that the present life is a sojourn in a far country? for art thou a citizen? Nay thou art a wayfarer. Understandest thou what I say? Thou art not a citizen, but thou art a wayfarer, and a traveller. Say not: I have this city and that. No one has a city. The city is above. Present life is a journey. . . .The time of thy departure is uncertain, the tenure of thy possessions insecure, there are innumerable precipices, and billows on every side of thee. Why dost thou rave about shadows? why desert the reality and run after shadows?" Chrysostom, *Two Homilies on Eutropius,* -- When he had quitted the asylum of the church, and had been taken captive, NPNF, First Series, Vol. 9, Homily 2, 255; cf. PG 52.401AB.

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The Present Life as an Opportunity for the Formation of Christian Character

Chrysostom rightly insists that the abundance of trials in this life will remain inexplicable *if God's purpose in allowing trials is ignored or misunderstood.* What is the reason for so many trials and snares? "The present life is a wrestling school, a gymnasium, a battle, a smelting furnace, and a dyer's house of virtue."[246] All of these metaphors are frequently used by Chrysostom to illustrate his fundamental conviction that God is presently at work transforming "the soul into a serviceable condition for virtue."[247] Each needs to be studied in closer detail.

The present life is a "smelting furnace." How so? First, a smelting furnace purifies metals. It burns away impurities and leaves only the valued gold. In the same way, God is active to create "steadfast and patiently enduring people" and does so by allowing the coinage of

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[246] Chrysostom, *On Providence*, 21: 1; cf. SCh., *Sur la Prov.*, 21: 1, 250.

[247] He writes: "Desiring to transform the soul into a serviceable condition for virtue, he works it, melts it, and delivers it over to the testing of trials, in order to strengthen those who have lost heart and who have let themselves go, in order that those who have already been tested might be even more approved and unconquered by the plots of the demons and the snares of the devil, completely worthy for the reception of the good things to come." Ibid., 21: 3; cf. SCh., *Sur la Prov.*, 21: 3, 252, 254.

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their lives "to be tried by every means."[248] Chrysostom specifically mentions how his own sufferings and those of his followers function as a kind of spiritual boot camp. Before these difficult times, many of his flock had been addicted to the theatre, horse races, and the dissolute practices that accompanied these diversions. The flame of persecution, "the fervent heat of a raging fire," had purified them, bringing them to their senses and gathering "such wealth, such gain, such profit" into the Church.[249]

The example of the paralytic healed by Jesus illustrates this process. God allowed the man to suffer for an extended period, not out of negligence or cruelty, but rather as "a sign of the greatest care for his welfare."

> For as a gold refiner having cast a piece of gold into the furnace suffers it to be proved by the fire until such time as he sees it has become purer: even so God permits the souls of men to be tested by troubles until they become pure and transparent and have reaped much profit from this process of sifting; wherefore this is the greatest species of benefit.[250]

We can be assured that God knows how long the metal must remain in the fire to be thoroughly cleansed. He will not allow it to remain in the fire "until it is destroyed and

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[248] Ibid., 21: 4; cf. SCh., *Sur la Prov.*, 21: 4, 254.

[249] Ibid., 19: 11-12; cf. SCh., *Sur la Prov.*, 19: 11-12, 240, 242.

[250] Chrysostom, *On the Paralytic Let Down through the Roof: and concerning the Equality of the Divine Father and the Son*, NPNF, First Series, Vol. 9, 212; cf. PG 51.50C.

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burnt up." Hence, we can know in our trials that "when He sees that we have become more pure, He releases us from our trials so that we may not be overthrown and cast down by the multiplication of our evils."[251]

Chrysostom also uses the furnace/flame metaphor to illustrate two other aspects of the spiritual life. First, he uses flames to represent the heat of virtue itself. Joseph, for example, is accused, slandered, and imprisoned by the frustrated and infuriated wife of Potiphar. Her efforts to harm him, however, are futile. The trials she instigates are simply like chaff thrown on the coals of Joseph's virtue. The coals might at first be covered, but in actuality are being kindled to an even higher intensity. "so virtue, when it seems to be mistreated, later flowers to an even greater degree through the very obstacles themselves, reaching to heaven itself."[252]

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[251] Ibid., 212; cf. PG 51.50D. Chrysostom usually speaks of gold being refined in the furnace. In his homilies on the statues, however, he speaks of God burning away rust on the soul. "For just as in the case of rusted implements, he that rubs them only with water, though he spend a long time on them, will not rid them of all that foulness; but he that puts them in a furnace, will make them presently brighter than even those newly fabricated: so too, a soul, stained with the rust of sin, if it cleanse itself slightly, and in a negligent way, and be every day repenting, will gain no further advantage. But if it cast itself into the furnace, as it were, of the fear of God, it will in a very short time purge all away." Chrysostom, *The Homilies on the Statues to the People of Antioch*, NPNF, First Series, Vol. 9, Homily 20, 480; cf. PG 49.209D.

[252] Chrysostom, *On Providence*, 22: 11; cf. SCh., *Sur la Prov.*, 22: 11, 262.

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Second, as a smelter's furnace purifies, it also separates. So persecution and trials serve to separate true believer from mere pretender. Many in the Church had "clothed themselves in a mask of piety." The sudden rush of persecution had washed their sham away "like water, and what they really were" was disclosed.

> Now this is no small thing. Rather it is of considerable importance for the utility of those who are willing to pay heed, both for the discerning of those who have skins of sheep and for avoiding the mixture of wolves who conceal themselves as sheep with those who really are such. *For this present time has become a furnace for distinguishing those pieces of money containing bronze by melting down the lead, burning up the residue, and rendering the precious material even more precious* (my emphasis).[253]

Athletic metaphors are also frequently employed by Chrysostom to illustrate God's providence and the process of spiritual formation, and two of his favorites are the present life as a "wrestling school" (Παλαίστρα) and "gymnasium" (γυμνάσιον).[254] Life in this world is a training camp where the spiritual athlete is coached to respond in a virtuous manner to whatever God in his providence allows to occur, including the attack of the devil. A lack of preparation and training will guarantee defeat at the time

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[253] Ibid., 19: 13-14; cf. SCh., *Sur la Prov.*, 19: 13-14, 242.

[254] cf. Ibid., 21: 1; cf. SCh., 21: 1, 250. For a detailed analysis of Chrysostom's athletic metaphors, cf. J.A. Sawhill, *The Use of the Athletic Metaphors in the Biblical Homelies of St. John Chrysostom*, Dissertation, Princeton, 1928.

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of the true contest.[255] On the other hand, the trained athlete can expect to triumph. In fact, to take away the attacks of the devil would be to rob prepared athletes of the chance to display their power and receive their crown.[256]

The disciplines of the spiritual life are an integral part of this training process.[257] Chrysostom recommends, for example, the discipline of self-denial as part of the training regimen in his homilies on the gospel of Matthew.

If now it should happen, as I pray it may not happen

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[255] Chrysostom compares the thirty day preparation period of catechumens as a kind of wrestling school in which they are momentarily separated from the dangers of life for a time of intense training. "For in the wrestling schools falls of the athletes are devoid of danger. For the wrestling is with friends, and they practice all their exercises on the persons of their teachers. . . .So then, in your case these thirty days are like some wrestling school, both for exercise and practice: let us learn from thence already to get the better of that evil demon." Chrysostom, *Instructions to Catechumens*, NPNF, First Series, Vol. 9, First Instruction, 162; cf. PG 49.228B-C.

[256] Chrysostom states: ". . . .if the antagonist were taken away he who overcomes is thereby injured. For if thou lettest the adversary remain, the more slothful are injured, not on account of the more diligent, but by their own slothfulness; whereas if thou takest away the antagonist, the more diligent are betrayed on account of the slothful, and neither exhibit their own power, nor win crowns." Chrysostom, *Three Homilies Concerning the Power of Demons*, NPNF, First Series, Vol. 9, Homily 2, 187.

[257] In his homilies on Acts Chrysostom states: ". . . .if by dint of study and practice we can throttle into submission even elephants and wild horses, much more the passions within us. . . .We have never practised this art: never in a time of leisure when there is no contest, talked over with ourselves what shall be useful for us. We are never to be seen in our place on the chariot, until the time for the contest is actually come. Hence the ridiculous figure we make there." Chrysostom, *Homilies on Acts*, NPNF, Series One, Vol. 11, Homily 29, 187-188; cf. PG 60.220B.

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> nor at any time fall out, that there be a war against churches, and a persecution, imagine how great will be the ridicule, how sore the reproaches. And very naturally; for when no one exercises himself in the wrestling school (ἐν τῇ παλαίστρᾳ. . . .γυμνάζηται), how shall he be distinguished in the contests?. . . . Ought we not every day to wrestle and fight and run (παλαίειν. . . .καὶ πυκτεύειν, καὶ τρέχειν)? See ye not them that are called Pentathli, when they have no antagonists, how they fill a sack with much sand, and hanging it up try their full strength thereupon? . . . .These do thou emulate, and practise the wrestlings of self-denial (τῆς φιλοσοφίας τὰ παλαίσματα). For indeed there are many that provoke to anger, and incite to lust, and kindle a great flame. Stand therefore against thy passions, bear nobly the mental pangs, that thou mayest endure also those of the body.[258]

Chrysostom's premonition of future persecution was fulfilled in the last years of his life, and it was precisely those Christians who were prepared and trained who stood firm in their sufferings. Well trained Christians who were in prison, abused, and executed were "these extraordinary spiritual athletes" (τῶν παραδόξων τούτων ἀθλητῶν) who had been coached and prepared by the master trainer.[259]

Chrysostom exhorts his readers, though, to not only focus on the recent persecutions, but also on "the things which have resulted: the rewards, the recompense, *the awards for the athlete who wins in the games and the prizes won in the contest*" (ἀλλα καὶ τὰ ἐκ τούτων ἐκβησόμενα, τοὺς

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[258] Chrysostom, *Homilies on St. Matthew*, NPNF, First Series, Vol. 10, Homily 33, 224; cf. PG 57.395B-C.

[259] Ibid., 22: 1; cf. SCh., *Sur la Prov.*, 22: 1, 256.

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μισθοὺς, τὰς ἀμοιβάς, τὰ βραβεῖα, τὰ ἔπαθλα) (my emphasis).[260] If trials were not permitted, such as the "conflagration" the spiritual athletes Shadrach, Meshach, and Abendego endured, "there would not have been such a radiant recompense, nor such a brilliant crown."[261]

Chrysostom often uses the metaphor of the spiritual life as a combat or battle. The martyrs are praised because they had prepared themselves for battle (τὸν ἀγῶνα) and willingly died in the struggle.[262] By doing so, they provided an example for others, "training men and women for the battles of the Christian life."[263] Chrysostom is quick to observe that not only men, but also women and children are involved in this fight to the death, often showing "greater bravery than men."[264] Athanasius makes the same point in his discussion of the inspiration Christ's victory over the devil through the cross has given to his followers.

> But when they are gone over to Christ's faith and teaching, their contempt for death is so great that they even eagerly rush upon it, and become witnesses for the Resurrection the Saviour has accomplished against it. For while still tender in years they make

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[260] Ibid., 9: 6; cf. SCh., *Sur la Prov.*, 9: 6, 148.

[261] Ibid., 22: 2; cf. SCh., *Sur la Prov.*, 22: 2, 256.

[262] Ibid., 19: 3; cf. SCh., *Sur la Prov.*, 19: 3, 234.

[263] Ibid., 19: 10; cf. SCh., *Sur la Prov.*, 19: 10, 240.

[264] Ibid., 19: 3; cf. SCh., *Sur la Prov.*, 19: 3, 234.

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> haste to die, and not men only, but women also, exercise themselves by bodily discipline against it.[265]

The dedicated Christian can expect conflict because of the devil's opposition to God's kingdom and its extension in this world. He specifically attacks those whom he sees responding to God. Just as pirates and thieves ignore "chaff and hay, or sand," but are quick to plunder "gold and pearls," so "in like manner when the devil sees the wealth of the soul gathered together and an abundance of piety increased, *it is there he gets down to work and plies his machinations*" (my emphasis).[266] Those who through careful training for battle have acquired an alert disposition are aware of the devil's wiles,[267] and through the victory of Christ are protected from the harm the devil might be able to inflict on the unwary or unprepared. His schemes are repelled and actually become a means God uses to develop

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[265] Athanasius, *On the Incarnation of the Word*, NPNF, Series Two, Vol. 4, 51; cf. PG 25.144B.

[266] Chrysostom, *On Providence*, 22: 17; cf. SCh., *Sur la Prov.*, 22: 17, 266.

[267] In his homilies on Acts Chrysostom states: "It is a contest, this life present: if so, to fight is our business now: it is war and battle. In war one does not seek to have rest, in war one does not seek to have dainty living, one is not anxious about riches, one's care is not about a wife then: one thing only he looks at, how he may overcome his foes. Be this our care likewise: if we overcome, and return with the victory, God will give us all things. Be this alone our study, how we may overcome the devil: though after all it is not our own study that does it, but God's grace does the whole business (ἀλλὰ τῆς τοῦ θεοῦ χάριτός ἐστι τὸ πᾶν)." Chrysostom, *Homilies on Acts*, NPNF, First Series, Vol. 11, Homily 15, 97; cf. PG 60.124A.

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and mature the character of believers, thereby magnifying the church's ministry in the world.

> Nevertheless, though he had set so many traps, not only did he not shake the Church, but instead he made her more brilliant. For during the period when she was not troubled she did not teach the world as effectively as she now does to be patient, to practice self-restraint, to bear trials, to demonstrate steadfast endurance, to scorn the things of the present life, to pay no regard to riches, to laugh at honor, to pay no heed to death, to think lightly of life, to abandon homeland, households, friends, and close relations, to be prepared for all kinds of wounds, to throw oneself against the swords, to consider all the illustrious things of the present life -- I am speaking of honor, glories, power, and luxury -- as more fragile than the flowers of springtime.[268]

This extended passage captures well Chrysostom's overall perspective on this present world as an arena God uses to shape our character. The present life is a smelting furnace, a wrestling school, a gymnasium, and a battle ground, *specifically because we are unfinished products, works of art* that God is molding into his image through the trials and various adverse circumstances he allows to enter our lives in his gracious providence.

Other metaphors Chrysostom employs reinforce this central truth. For example, this life is a "dyer's house of virtue." The hides to be dyed are initially unfit for the reception of the dye, and must be worked vigorously by the

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[268] Chrysostom, *On Providence*, 23: 3; cf. SCh., *Sur la Prov.*, 23: 3, 268, 270.

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tanners in order to bring out the valued color.[269] Another illustration describes this life as winter rather than summer. Wise farmers wait for winter to pass, knowing that the germination of the seed during this harsh season is absolutely necessary. They focus their attention, not "on what the wheat suffers during the season of cold," but rather on what is soon to be obtained.[270]

God does not leave us alone in the battle, however, but has willingly entered into the arena with us, in the incarnation becoming what we are, identifying with us in our suffering, providing us with an example of how to respond to our trials, and supplying us with the essential supernatural power we need to triumph in the gift of the Holy Spirit.

> For he himself passed through all these things and shared in them with you; he surpassingly conquered all of these things, training and teaching you not to be anxious about any of these trials. Still, he was not satisfied only with this, but *having returned to heaven he freely gave the indescribable gift of the*

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[269] Ibid., 21: 1; cf. SCh., *Sur la Prov.*, 21: 1, 252.

[270] Ibid., 9: 5; cf. SCh., *Sur la Prov.*, 9: 5, 146, 148. In speaking to the people of Antioch during the crisis of the statues, Chrysostom describes such times as a winter of the soul: "And this may be observed, not only amongst men, but even with the very seeds; for if, in that case, we expect the ear of corn to spring and flourish, there must be much rain, much gathering of the clouds, and much frost; and the time of sowing is also a rainy season. *Since therefore the winter, a winter not of the elements, but of souls, has now set in, let us too sow in this winter that we may reap in the summer; let us sow tears, that we may reap gladness*" (my emphasis). Chrysostom, *The Homilies on the Statues to the People of Antioch*, NPNF, First Series, Vol. 9, Homily 4, 364; cf. PG 49.59D-60A. cf. Ibid., Homily 18, 459; cf. PG 49.180D.

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> *Holy Spirit* and sent the apostles to minister as his servants (my emphasis).[271]

It is the grace of the Holy Spirit that teaches us that our trials and sufferings are permitted to take place so that the truth of the gospel might shine more brightly, in our own lives and to the unbelieving world around us.[272] The Spirit is, indeed, the oil the divine trainer applies liberally to his athlete, insuring triumph over all enemies and a lasting crown in heaven.[273]

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[271] Ibid., 8 8; cf. SCh., *Sur la Prov.*, 8: 8, 138; cf. L. Meyer, *Saint Jean Chrysostome, Maître de la perfection chrétienne*, 54.

[272] cf. Chrysostom, *Homily -- Concerning Lowliness of Mind; and Commentary on Philippians* 1: 18, NPNF, First Series, Vol. 9, 151; cf. PG 51.317A.

[273] Cf. Chrysostom, *Homilies on the Gospel of Saint Matthew*, NPNF, First Series, Vol. 10, Homily 11, 74-75; cf. PG 57.202C.

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Biographical Reflection

My purpose in supplying a brief biographical reflection on Chrysostom's life is not to reduplicate the biographies already in existence, nor to focus in minute detail on every aspect of Chrysostom's life that might pertain to his understanding of providence.[274] Perhaps my goal in this final section can best be illustrated by Stanley Hauerwas's insistence that we cultivate a mature understanding of the mysterious nature of human suffering "only as we are able to locate our lives in relation to those lives which manifest God's glory. . . ."[275]

A central point in Hauerwas's argument affirms that the quest to understand suffering in an isolated, individualistic manner, especially for those seeking to comprehend its reality from a Christian perspective, will be skewed from the outset because the reality of the wider

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[274] For detailed biographies, cf. Dom Chrysostomus Baur, *John Chrysostom and His Time*, Volumes 1 and 2, (Westminster, Maryland: The Newman Press, 1960), Donald Attwater, *St. John Chrysostom: Pastor and Preacher*, (London: Harvill Press, 1959), Palladius, *Dialogue on the Life of St. John Chrysostom*, tranlated and edited by Robert T. Meyer, (New York: Newman Press, 1985), Socrates, *Ecclesiastical History*, revised by A.C. Zenos, NPNF, Second Series, Vol. 2, 138-152, Sozomen, *Ecclesiastical History*, revised by Chester D. Hartranft, NPNF, Second Series, Vol. 2, 399-418.

[275] Stanley Hauwerwas, *Naming the Silences: God, Medicine, and the Problem of Suffering*, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990), xii.

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Christian community and its relationship to suffering has been left out of the discussion.

> It is clear that something has gone decisively wrong for Christians when we underwrite the widespread assumption that there is a so-called problem of evil which is intelligible from anyone's perspective -- that is, when we turn the Christian faith into a system of beliefs that can be or is universally known without the conversion of being incorporated within a specific community of people. In effect, it is to underwrite the Enlightenment assumption that we are most fully ourselves when we are free of all traditions and communities other than those we have chosen from the position of autonomy. In such a context, suffering cannot help but appear absurd, since it always stands as a threat to that autonomy.[276]

Key events of Chrysostom's life, then, are instructive as to his own understanding of divine providence, but especially as we remember that *his perception of his own experience was framed by the central themes of the gospel as celebrated in the community of the Church*. Malingrey argues, for example, that we can learn much about how both Chrysostom and Olympias perceived themselves and their exile from the simple formula at the beginning of each letter in their well-known correspondence. "Le seul titre de gloire

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[276] Ibid., 53-54. Kenneth Surin makes much the same point when he writes: "In a properly Christian context, conversion is inseparable from fellowship, a fellowship which is at root fellowship. . . .with the Trinity itself. This fellowship is inseparable from commitment to a community, a commmitment expressed in sharing its way of life, its customs and practices." Kenneth Surin, *Theology and the Problem of Evil*, (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1986), 23. quoted in Hauwerwas, *Naming the Silences*, 53.

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que chacun porte devant la postérité, c'est son rang dans l'église: Ἐπίσκοπος, διάκονος. . . .l'un à l'autre unis par le lien le plus fort: ἐν κυρίῳ, dans le Seigneur."[277]

Chrysostom clearly viewed his own experience as tied to the broader narrative of the Christian community throughout history. It is that community and the gospel it proclaimed and continues to preach and model which provides the point of integration for comprehending the themes Chrysostom presents in *On Providence*, and for understanding Chrysostom's perspective and self-understanding as divine providence worked its way out in his own experience. It should be no surprise to us that though Chrysostom apparently dies alone in exile, tradition also tells us that on the eve of his death he was visited by St. Basiliscus, martyr and former bishop of Comana. He reportedly said: "Be of good courage, Brother John; for tomorrow we shall be together."[278] Martyr and exile commune together within the shared fabric of a larger communal narrative, and it is that broader story, one of sin and salvation, present trial and future glory, which gives coherence and final meaning to their common suffering.

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[277] Jean Chrysostome, *Lettres à Olympias*, introduction et traduction par Anne-Marie Malingrey, Sources Chrétiennes, (Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1947), 7.

[278] Dom Chrysostomos Baur, *John Chrysostom and His Time*, Volume 2, 421.

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For Chrysostom, it is the gospel and the community it creates that gives the particular events of his own life their singular rhyme and reason. His understanding of providence is not shaped within a vacuum. Rather, it is forged through the years he served as a deacon and priest in Antioch and as an archbishop in Constantinople. As we have noted in our discussion of the major themes of *On Providence,* Chrysostom's understanding of providence remained consistent throughout the years of his ministry. The same principles he preached to the people of Antioch during the incident of the statues reappear in the pages of *On Providence.* The question we must ask, however, is this: How well did these principles serve him during the final crisis of his own life? As he himself experienced firsthand the apparent vicissitudes of providence, how did the principles of *On Providence* demonstrate themselves in his response to his circumstances? As Hauerwas might put it, how did the end of Chrysostom's life manifest God's glory in such a way that we too can incorporate its lessons into our own particular narratives?

A short rehearsal of the key events of Chrysostom's last five years (402 AD-407 AD) will help to lay the necessary groundwork for answering our questions. The seeds of future crisis and tragedy were planted in 402 with the arrival of the Long Brothers in Constantinople, a group of

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monks who had run afoul of Theophilus, archbishop of Alexandria.[279] Theophilus had been less than pleased with the appointment of Chrysostom to be archbishop in Constantinople. Perhaps this was because he recognized, as Malingrey argues, that here was one church leader he would be unable to dominate or intimidate.[280] Chrysostom did not wish to embroil himself in a controversy over the Long Brothers; he welcomed them to Constantinople, listened to their complaints of unfair treatment from Theophilus, and provided them with lodging. The Long Brothers asked John to intervene on their behalf with Theophilus and he attempted to bring about a reconciliation. Chrysostom's efforts failed.

At this juncture the Long Brothers appealed to the empress Eudoxia and their petition was granted. Theophilus was commanded by imperial decree to appear before a synod in Constantinople where his actions against the Long Brothers would be investigated.

For the moment Chrysostom's position seemed secure. In fact, he would preside over the enquiry into Theophilus's

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[279] For Palladius's account of the incident of the Long Brothers, cf. Palladius, *Dialogue on the Life of St. John Chrysostom*, translated and edited by Robert T. Meyer, Ancient Christian Writers, Volume 45, (New York: Newman Press, 1985), 44-50.

[280] Jean Chrysostome, *Lettres à Olympias*, Introduction et Traduction de Anne-Marie Malingrey, 19.

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activities. The course of events was soon to change. Theophilus arrived in Constantinople in August of 403 and immediately began to marshal together a group of people who harbored long standing grudges against John.

Theophilus's initial assessment of John had proved to be correct. Chrysostom had shown himself to be an implacable foe of every form of corruption among the leaders of the church and within the imperial family, and over time had acquired a large group of enemies.[281] Among these embittered foes were the bishops Acacius, Severian, and Antiochus, the empress Eudoxia, and the wealthy widows Marsa, Eugraphia, and Castricia. All had at one time or another been rebuked or disciplined by Chrysostom, but unfortunately his attempts to reorient the direction of their lives had only resulted in further embitterment.[282]

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[281] Malingrey mentions Palladius's interesting categories for dissolute clergy:
1. Clergy who did not love God unreservedly (τὸ ἀφιλόθεον μέρος), as evidenced by their practice of living with "spiritual sisters."
2. Clergy who had succumbed to greed (πλεονεξία).
3. Clergy who practiced a soft life, one frequently characterized by gluttony (οἱ γαστρίμαργοι). Ibid., 18-19; cf. Palladius, *Dialogue on the Life of St. John Chrysostom*, translated and edited by Robert T. Meyer, 38-39.

[282] The tone of Chrysostom's rebukes can be discerned in his rebuke to Marsa, Eugraphia, and Castricia. "You gray-haired old women! At your age, why do you compel yourselves to make your bodies young again, wearing locks of hair upon your foreheads like common whores? You outrage the rest of the free women, beguiling all you meet, some of you even widows to boot." Palladius, *Dialogue on the Life of St.*

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Within three weeks time Theophilus had galvanized this latent hostility against Chrysostom into active opposition. He who was to preside over the investigation of Theophilus suddenly found himself accused of multiple offenses.

The charges against John were officially formulated at the infamous Synod of the Oak. The irregularities of this synod are well-known. It was convened and led by Theophilus, Severian, and Acacius, men who were already determined to oust Chrysostom from leadership of the church in Constantinople. The charges against Chrysostom included using violent speech against others, unfaithfulness in his ecclesiastical activities, failing to pray upon entering or leaving the church, irregularities in his ordinations, eating by himself in a gluttonous fashion, and receiving women in private.[283]

Chrysostom rightly saw that the Synod of the Oak had already predetermined his fate. He refused to appear before the synod as long as his declared enemies were seated at the tribunal and instead issued a call for an ecumenical

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John Chrysostom, 51-52. Malingrey comments: "Son zèle apostolique n'avait pas toléré, chez les pasteurs, les fautes ni même la médiocrité. Ils étaient donc nombreux ceux qui, en donnant leur avis, trouveraient là une belle occasion de se venger d'une trop grande sévérité." Jean Chrysostome, *Lettres à Olympias*, introduction et traduction de Anne-Marie Malingrey, 21.

[283] cf. Palladius, *Dialogue on the Life of St. John Chrysostom*, translated and edited by Robert T. Meyer, 74-90.

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council. His request was ignored and the Synod of the Oak proceeded to eject him from his episcopate. Arcadius, Roman emperor and husband of Eudoxia, went along with the charade and issued the order for Chrysostom's exile to Praenetum.

This first exile, however, lasted only a short time. Eudoxia unexpectedly called Chrysostom back to Constantinople. Why? Baur lists a number of possible explanations. Socrates and Sozomen argue that the threatening attitude of the populace worried Eudoxia. Theodoret mentions an earthquake frightened the empress. Baur attaches greatest weight to the report of Palladius that since the removal of Chrysostom some kind of misfortune had occurred in the imperial chamber. He interprets this to be a miscarriage and contends that the empress connected it with the unjust exile of the archbishop.[284]

Whatever the true cause might have been behind the recall of Chrysostom, he returned to Constantinople and enjoyed two months of calm in which he freely functioned as archbishop. Circumstances, though, were soon to change again for the worse. A statue of Eudoxia had recently been erected across the square from St. Sophia and games were commissioned to celebrate this event. Chrysostom, for whom the truth was a greater concern than the nuances of

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[284] Dom Chrysostomus Baur, *John Chrysostom and His Time*, Vol. II, Constantinople, 264-265.

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political realities, spoke out against the pagan character of the games and Eudoxia was deeply offended. John's enemies recognized that the opportunity had arisen to renew their machinations. At Easter events came to a head when the emperor Arcadius refused to accept communion from Chrysostom and forbade him access to the Cathedral. Armed forces disrupted Easter services, arrested priests, and disrupted baptisms. John retired to the episcopal palace and over the next few months relations became even more strained. Finally, five days after Pentecost a second order of exile was obtained by Acacius and Severian from the emperor.[285]

On June 20, 404 Chrysostom left Constantinople under military escort. His sufferings were only beginning. Cucusus, a small, isolated town in the mountains of Armenia, had been selected as the site of his exile. Harsh winters, separation from friends, frequent illness, and the threat of Isaurian incursions continually plagued Chrysostom.[286] And yet

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[285] cf. Malingrey's introduction to Chrysostom's *Lettres à Olympias*, 26-27.

[286] He writes to Olympias during his first winter in Cucucus: "For the winter, which has become more than commonly severe, brought on a storm of internal disorder even more distressing, and during the last two months I have been no better than one dead, nay worse. . . .in spite of endless contrivances I could not shake off the pernicious effects of the cold. . . .I underwent extreme sufferings, perpetual vomiting supervening on headache, loss of appetite, and constant sleeplessness." John Chrysostom, *Letters to*

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in the midst of these hardships, Chrysostom maintained his equilibrium and remained a faithful source of encouragement to his followers.

We see this readily demonstrated in his correspondence with Olympias. It is in these letters that we discover the answers to our original enquiry, for here Chrysostom both reiterates the theoretical foundation found in *On Providence*, and *illustrates how theory and praxis are intersecting in his own life*. That is to say, the narrative related in the Olympian correspondence shows us how Chrysostom integrated his theory into his own experience, and provides us with a helpful existential grid for screening our own interpretation of his ideas. His seventeenth and last extant letter to Olympias exemplifies this dynamic well.

Olympias is despondent over how circumstances have evolved, and is also suffering from some kind of physical ailment. How does Chrysostom go about comforting and encouraging her? First, he takes time to inform Olympias about the practical realities of life in Cucucus. While previous winters had been harsh, he is now adjusting well. "For the winter is only what it is wont to be in Armenia; nothing more need be said about it; and it does not very

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Olympias, NPNF, First Series, Vol. 9, 297.

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seriously injure me."[287] He has worked hard and creatively to overcome the cold. A constant fire, screens and rugs, and remaining indoors have reduced his suffering. Though Chrysostom frequently teaches that suffering is to be expected in the life of a Christian, he is not at all averse to doing whatever he can to reduce its effects, apart from compromising the gospel itself.

Second, Chrysostom is well aware of the debilitating nature of pain and illness. He exhorts Olympias "to pay great attention to the restoration of thy bodily health" and evidences a keen awareness of the relationship between mental, spiritual, and physical well-being.

> For dejection causes sickness; and when the body is exhausted and enfeebled, and remains in a neglected condition, deprived of the assistance of physicians, and of a wholesome climate, and an abundant supply of the necessaries of life, consider how great an aggravation of distress is occasioned thereby.[288]

Chrysostom takes great interest in describing in detail to Olympias the effectiveness of medicine sent to him by Syncletion and urges her to begin to employ it.[289] He gently

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[287] Ibid., 293.

[288] Ibid., 293.

[289] "I beseech you therefore to make use of this remedy also yourself and to arrange that some more of it may be sent to me. For having again felt somewhat upset, I again had recourse to it, and completely cured my disorder; for it allays the deep internal inflammation, draws out moisture on the skin, causes a moderate degree of warmth, infuses no

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rebukes Olympias for not taking better care of herself, for if she had done so she "would be in a far more satisfactory condition."

Once Chrysostom has encouraged Olympias to take whatever practical steps she can to improve her situation, he begins to apply principles we also encounter in *On Providence.* For example, he reminds Olympias that those who suffer from sickness will one day reap a great reward if in the midst of their illness they still maintain a thankful spirit. "Have I not often," he asks, "both in person, and through letters, discoursed to you concerning this theme?"[290] It is not the sickness itself that should arouse our thanksgiving, but rather that it provides the opportunity to exercise "the queen of virtues," "patient endurance in suffering."[291] Chrysostom blends together the themes of *eschatological hope* and *this present world as a purifying furnace* as he reminds Olympias of the example of Job. If Job responded in faith during the time of his illness, how much more should Olympias endure her suffering faithfully, especially as she lived in the age of grace Christ had

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little vigor, and excites an appetite for food; and all these effects I experienced in the course of a few days." Ibid., 293.

[290] Ibid., 293-294.

[291] Ibid., 294.

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introduced.[292]

> For in proportion as the strain of the affliction is increased are the garlands of victory multiplied; in proportion as the gold is heated does it become purified, the longer the merchant makes his voyage on the sea, the larger is the freight which he collects.[293]

Paul himself fervently requested that God might deliver him from his "thorn in the flesh,"[294] a thorn Chrysostom interprets as "the blows, the bonds, the chains, the imprisonments, the being dragged about, and maltreated, and tortured by the scourges of public executioners."[295] When it became clear to Paul that his petition was not to be granted, "having learned the benefit of the trial, he held his peace, and rejoiced at the things which happened to him."[296] Again the model Chrysostom presents is two sided; do everything you can to avoid suffering. If it cannot be avoided, if your prayers are not answered in terms of deliverance, know that God will remove any lasting harm from what you are enduring. The present situation, with its apparently unrelieved suffering, will bear lasting fruit in

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[292] Ibid., 295.

[293] Ibid., 295.

[294] 2 Corinthians 12: 7

[295] Chrysostom, *Letters to Olympias*, NPNF, First Series, Vol. 9, 295.

[296] Ibid., 295.

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the long run. Genuine harm has a single source, one he delineates in an earlier letter. "I at least have not ceased, and will not cease saying that sin is the only thing which is really distressing."[297]

Chrysostom closes his letter by referring Olympias to the treatise he had recently completed, "No One Can Harm the Person Who Does Not Harm Himself." Interestingly enough, he also mentions a second treatise which he is now sending to her which "contends for the same position. .I beg you therefore to go over it constantly, and if your health permits you, recite it aloud. For if you will, it may prove an effectual remedy for you."[298] Malingrey notes that this second text is in all likelihood *On Providence.*[299]

It is highly significant that Chrysostom composes *On Providence* in the midst of his own suffering in exile. One might have expected that recent events could have disillusioned him. After all, his exile was in many ways a direct result of his faithfulness to his vocation as priest and bishop. One can imagine Chrysostom on a cold winter's

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[297] Ibid., 302.

[298] Ibid., 296.

[299] "Tous les critiques s'accordent à penser que le second texte adressé à Olympias est celui qui nous intéresse." Jean Chrysostome, *Sur la Providence de Dieu*, introduction, texte critique, traduction, et notes de Anne-Marie Malingrey, 7.

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night in Cucusus, perhaps during the harsh winter of 405, asking himself if this indeed was how God should treat those who diligently sought his will and attempted to live it out. Was it during the bouts of nausea, while he was shut up in a smoky room, wrapped in blankets to ward off the cold, that the examples of Abraham, Joseph, and John the Baptist came to mind? As he states in *On Providence*, all had received a taste of the promise, all had been faithful, and all had suffered greatly. John the Baptist's life had ended violently and unjustly in a dark prison cell. And so, too, was Chrysostom's own life drawing to a close. He was to live only a few more months after the completion of *On Providence.*

Yet I have been unable to find a single instance in Chrysostom's correspondence or discourses from these last months where he questions the goodness and love of God for him. On the one hand, he never denies the suffering he is enduring. He gives detailed descriptions of the isolation of Cucusus, its harsh climate, his anguish at this separation from his friends, his frequent illnesses, and his fear of the Isaurian raiders. *The harm in these situations*, though, is dissipated as Chrysostom views them in the light the gospel sheds. Indeed, it is the thematic structure of *On Providence* which provides Chrysostom with a grid for understanding what is happening to him, *and which proves to*

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be strong enough to bear the storms of his last days. Motifs such as the love and goodness of God as a fundamental presupposition for all God's actions, the mystery of God's providence and the implications of this incomprehensibility for what we can expect to know and understand, the present life as an opportunity for the formation of Christian character, and the reality of eschatological hope and judgment -- these were not abstract concepts for Chrysostom. Rather, they were validated in the narrative of his own life.

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Translation Methodology

While I had toyed with the difficulties of translation in the late 1970's, it was not until I moved to France in 1980 that I began to experience on a first hand basis the complex problems involved in communicating between two different cultures and languages. I quickly learned that the task of translation involved more than simply producing a literal equivalence between words, clauses, and sentences. As Eugene Nida argues, too often literal equivalence does *not communicate a corresponding meaning* and the aim of an effective translation is defeated.[300]

I would contend that the most profound advance in linguistics and translation theory since the time when Anne-Marie Malingrey translated *On Providence* into French in the early 1960's has occurred in the area of semantics. Nida, for example, has made a tremendous contribution to our understanding of semantic relationships and their importance in accurate translation. His insights and methodology have influenced my own translation of *On Providence.* Nida describes the following stages of semantic analysis:[301]

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[300] Nida comments that ". . . .proper correspondence of meaning is a *sine qua non* of any interlingual communication." Eugene A. Nida, *Exploring Semantic Structures,* (Munich: Wilhelm Fink Verlag, 1975), 7.

[301] Eugene A. Nida, *Toward a Science of Translating,*

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1. *Determination of the correct form of the text.* Malingrey's labors have produced an excellent critical Greek and French edition of the text. I have taken account of her judgments in my translation.

2. *Lexical-grammatical features of the immediate unit.* In this step semantic elements are determined or "decomposed" into their simplest forms and the most explicit statement of interrelationships is observed. Form and content are analyzed as "important factors in determining meaning." Throughout the translation process I have used both G.W.H. Lampe's *A Patristic Greek Lexicon* and H. R. Liddell and R. Scott's *Greek-English Lexicon*. I have also frequently consulted H.W. Smyth's *Greek Grammar*.[302]

3. *Discourse context.* The meaning of a unit is analyzed "in terms of the wider context of the total relevant discourse, whether this unit is a paragraph, section, chapter, or book." Individual units cannot be treated as separate elements. The discourse must be analyzed in terms of both content and form. For example, to translate Chrysostom correctly, I have taken into account

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(Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1964), 242-245.

[302] G.W. Lampe, *A Patristic Greek Lexicon*, Two Volumes, (Oxford: At the Clarendon Press, 1961), Henry George Liddell and Robert Scott, *A Greek-English Lexicon*, (New York: Harper and Brothers, Publishers, 1880), Herbert Weir Smyth, *Greek Grammar*, (Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1956).

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philosophical traditions and rhetorical devices he might well be employing.[303]

4. *Communicative context.* The meaning of the message cannot be adequately studied apart from an understanding of the "circumstances involved in the original communication, including such matters as time, place, author, audience, intent, and recorded response." As I have translated I have endeavored to keep in focus Chrysostom's background, the particular manner in which he spoke and wrote, and the central biographical and historical circumstances that prompted and informed the composing of *On Providence.*

5. *Cultural context of the source language.* Nida correctly insists that "words have meanings only in terms of the total cultural setting, and a discourse must be related

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[303] cf. T.E. Ameringer, *The Stylistic Influence of the Second Sophistic on the Panegyrical Sermons of St. John Chrysostom,* (Washington: The Catholic University of America Press, 1921), M.A. Burns, *Saint John Chrysostom's Homilies on the Statues,* (Washington: The Catholic University of America Press, 1930), G.J.M. Bartelink, "'Philosophie' et 'Philosophe' dans quelques oeuvres de Jean Chrysostome," Revue d'ascetique et de mystique, 144 (1960), 486-492, P.R. Coleman-Norton, "St. Chrysostom and the Greek Philosophers," Classical Philology, 25 (1930), 305-317, K. Elser, "Der heilige Chrysostomus und die Philosophie," Theologische Quartalschrift, 76 (1894), 550-554, Werner Jaeger, *Early Christianity and Greek Paideia,* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1961), A. Jagu, "Les philosophes grecs et le sens du peche," in *Theologie du peché,* (Tournai: Descleé et Clé, 1960), A.M. Malingrey, "*Philosophia.*" *Études d'un groupe de mots dans la littérature grecque, des Présocratiques au IV sìècle après J.C.,* (Paris: Librairie C. Klincksieck, 1961).

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to the wider sphere of human action or thought." That is to say, we must ask what is present in Chrysostom's larger cultural context that will provide helpful clues for understanding his discourse.[304]

6. *Cultural context of the receptor language.* How have certain expressions been traditionally translated in the receptor language? How has this influenced present perceptions of the text? How satisfactory have the correspondences been? Since *On Providence* has not been translated into English, I have consulted other English translations of the Chrysostom corpus in comparison with the *Patrologiae Cursus Completus* of J.P. Migne and critical Greek texts in the *Sources Chrétiennes* Series. Paul Harkin's relatively recent translation of Chrysostom's treatise *On the Incomprehensible Nature of God* has proven to be helpful at this juncture.[305]

My ultimate goal has been to provide a translation

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[304] cf. Peter Brown, *The World of Late Antiquity*, (London: Thames and Hudson, 1971), C. Baur, *John Chrysostom and His Time*, Two Volumes, (Westminster, Maryland: The Newman Press, 1959-1960), A.H.M. Jones, "St. John Chrysostom's Parentage and Education," Harvard Theological Review, 46 (1953), 171-173, J.A. Sawhill, *The Use of Athletic Metaphors in the Biblical Homilies of St. John Chrysostom, Diss.*, (Princeton: 1928), Robert L. Wilken, *John Chrysostom and the Jews: Rhetoric and Reality in the Late 4th Century*, (Berkeley, Los Angeles: University of California Press: 1983).

[305] John Chrysostom, *On the Incomprehensible Nature of God*, tr. Paul Harkins, (Washington: The Catholic University of America Press, 1984).

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which communicates the message of *On Providence* in such a way that a bilingual and bicultural person could say, "That is just the way we would say it."[306]

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[306] Eugene A. Nida, *Toward a Science of Translating,* 166. Obviously, translation theory is extremely complex. Further elaboration can be found in Eugene A. Nida, *Exploring Semantic Relationships*, Eugene A. Nida, *Language Structure and Translation,* (Stanford University Press, 1975), and Charles H. Kraft, *Christianity in Culture*, (Maryknoll: Orbid Books, 1979).

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The Critical Text

The critical Greek text I have used as the basis for my translation is that provided by Anne-Marie Malingrey in her translation of *On Providence* entitled *Sur la Providence de Dieu.*[307] The following introduction to the Greek textual tradition is based on Malingrey's own discussion and analysis.[308]

On Providence is found in the Greek textual tradition under the title Ἰατρῶν μὲν Παῖδες, "disciples of physicians." Neither Malingrey nor I have retained this title in our translations, largely because it has only an emphatic value in the Greek text, appearing as the first three words of Chrysostom's own prologue.[309]

The text of *On Providence* is found in the following complete editions of Chrysostom's works:

1. The Greek text in Sevile's 1612 edition, Vol. 7, 1-36.

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[307] John Chrysostome, *Sur la Providence de Dieu*, Introduction, Texte Critique, Traduction et Notes de Anne-Marie Malingrey, Sources Chrétiennes, No. 79, (Paris: Les Éditions du Cerf, 1961).

[308] Ibid., 25-49.

[309] Malingrey writes: "Nous n'avons pas cru devoir garder l'expression qui n'a qu'une valeur emphatique. Ceux qui exercent la médecine sont les héritiers d'une tradition reçue de leurs prédécesseurs, comme les disciples reçoivent l'enseignement du maître." Ibid., 53, note 1.

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2. The Greek and Latin text edited by Fronton du Duc, Vol. 5, 857-920, published at Paris in 1616.

3. The Greek and Latin text edited by Montfaucon, Vol. 3, 465-514, published at Paris in 1721. It is this edition which is reproduced by Migne, PG 52, 479-528.[310]

Savile's edition rests upon four manuscripts, while Montfaucon mentions five manuscripts which he consulted in compiling his edition. One of these texts does not include *On Providence.* Hence, the text we possess in complete editions rests upon a total of eight witnesses, an insufficient number for an adequate critical edition. Fortunately the works of Chrysostom were repeatedly copied during the Byzantine period, for use both in spiritual readings in monasteries and for liturgical purposes, and Malingrey has been able to identify sixty manuscripts containing *On Providence.*[311] These manuscripts are found in three areas:

1. The most reliable texts, those from the 10th and 11th centuries, are found as the ninth homily in a series of sermons Chrysostom preached on the incomprehensibility of God in Antioch from 386-387 A.D.

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[310] Ibid., 25.

[311] Ibid., 26.

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This grouping is at first glance strange. Malingrey notes that the first five sermons in this series remain stable in the manuscript tradition and were preached at Antioch in 386-387. There is then a twelve year gap between the first sermon and the sixth and a twenty year gap between the first and the ninth! A further surprising note is that the first eight texts were preached while the ninth, *On Providence,* was a written composition. These considerations move Malingrey to understand the common grouping as related to the identity of the theme developed, i.e., the incomprehensibility of God.[312]

2. The second series of manuscripts are found in diverse collections, largely due to a dislocation in textual groupings from the beginning of the 12th century. From the 12th century on *On Providence* is found in the same collection as previously, but also in diverse collections of Chrysostom's works and among diverse authors writing about the same theme.[313]

3. Finally, we have mutilated versions of the text. Malingrey attributes these mutilated sections to deterioration caused by the elements, rodents, and common

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[312] Ibid., 30-31.

[313] Ibid., 31.

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scribal errors. She also argues that certain sections of *On Providence* were separated from the main text to serve as catechesis during the 5th and 6th centuries.[314]

Malingrey's critical edition, then, is compiled from a careful analysis and comparison of Savile's edition. Her own research on the broad manuscript tradition confirms her belief that Savile relied on those manuscripts "qui sont dignes d'estime et cette abondance est conforme au goût de l'époque à laquelle le texte a été écrit."[315] In addition, Malingrey incorporated her own editorial modifications of Savile's text, reinterpretations based on three criteria:

1. Modifications which lead to the correction of distinguishable errors.

2. Modifications which give a preferable sense to Chrysostom's meaning, even though Savile's own choices can be defended.

3. Modifications which offer a different interpretation and which are based on variants attested by

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[314] Ibid., 32. Malingrey aptly summarizes matters when she writes: "Les différentes modalités qu'on peut constater dans la transmission du texte s'expliquent donc, selon les époques et les besoins, par le désir de grouper les textes d'un même auteur autour d'un même thème, ou d'illustrer un même sujet par des textes de différents auteurs, ou enfin de rétablir l'ordre selon lequel les textes ont été écrits." Ibid., 33.

[315] Ibid., 47.

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the most numerous manuscripts or those which most closely conform to the style of Chrysostom.[316]

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[316] Ibid., 47-48.

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Date of Composition

Chrysostom's seventeenth and last known letter to Olympias was probably written from Cucusus near the beginning of 407.[317] It is at the end of this letter that Chrysostom mentions a second discourse concerning providence and suffering which he is now sending to Olympias (καὶ τοῦτον ἠγωνίσατο τὸν ἀγῶνα ὁ λόγος ὃν ἀπέσταλκά σου τῇ τιμιότητι νῦν).[318] It is generally believed that this discourse is *On Providence.* Chrysostom does not mention the exact time of its composition, but a number of factors would indicate that it was written sometime in 406.

1. Chrysostom expressly states that the discourse is addressed to those scandalized over the recent events in Constantinople which have led to his exile and the persecution of his followers.[319] Hence, *On Providence* must have been written sometime after June 20, 404, the date John leaves Constantinople for the 66 day journey to Cucusus.

2. The rigors of the voyage to Cucusus from

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[317] I am following Malingrey at this point. cf. Anne-Marie Malingrey, introduction to *Sur la Providence de Dieu*, 7.

[318] Jean Chrysostome, *Lettres à Olympias*, Seconde édition, introduction, texte critique, traduction et notes par Anne-Marie Malingrey, 384.

[319] John Chrysostom, *On Providence,* prologue; cf. SCh., *Sur la Prov.*, prologue, 52.

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Constantinople make it highly unlikely that John composed it on the way. Chrysostom offers us a glimpse of the hardships of the journey in his correspondence to Olympias:

> Now when I arrived late one evening at Caesarea in an exhausted and worn-out condition, in the very height of a burning fever, faint and suffering to the last degree. . . .And in addition to this there was the fatigue of the journey, the toil, the strains, the total absence of attendants, the difficulty of getting supplies, the want of a physician, the wasting effects of toil, and heat and sleeplessness; thus I was well nigh a dead man when I entered the city.[320]

1. The extraordinary harshness of the winter of 404-405 and the difficulty of adjusting to life in his new home militates against Chrysostom composing *On Providence* soon after his arrival in Cucusus. Malingrey comments:

> Jean en fut très éprouvé, malgré les attentions délicates de son hôte Dioscore, attentif à le soulager. . . .Malgré les vêtements qu'il entassait, malgré le feu, tout fumant il est vrai, il eut froid. Il fut repris de ses douleurs d'estomac, de ses insomnies."[321]

In addition, in the fall of 405 Chrysostom was forced to flee from Cucusus for refuge in the fortress of Arabissos because of the danger of Isaurian raids. He suffered again from the lack of basic necessities, largely because the Isaurians were attacking the trade routes. The plague was

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[320] Chrysostom, *Letters to Olympias*, NPNF, First Series, Vol. 9, 299.

[321] Chrysostom, *Lettres à Olympias*, Malingrey's introduction, 29-30.

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also an ever present danger.

Chrysostom was finally able to return to Cucusus in 406. For a short time he enjoyed a period of peace, and in all likelihood composed *On Providence* during this interlude of calm. In the fall of 407 John received the imperial order to leave Cucusus for an even more desolate exile at Pityonte, on the eastern coast of the Black Sea. His health speedily deteriorated on route, to a great extent because of the cruelty of his military escort, and he died at Comana on September 14, 407.

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PART II -- *On Providence*

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τοῦ ἐν ἁγίοις πατρὸς ἡμῶν Ἰωάννου ἀρχιεπισκόπου Κωνσταντινουπόλεως πρὸς τοὺς σκανδαλιζομένους ἐπὶ ταῖς παρανομίαις ταῖς γινομέναις καὶ τῇ τοῦ λαοῦ καὶ πολλῶν ἱερέων διώξει καὶ περὶ τῆς τοῦ θεοῦ προνοίας καὶ περὶ ἀκαταλήπτου.

1. Ἰατρῶν μὲν παῖδες, ὅταν πυρέττοντάς τινας ἢ ἕτερον τι νόσημα νοσοῦντας μέλλωσι θεραπεύιν, αὐτοὺς πρῶτον ζητοῦσι τοὺς κάμνοντας ἰδεῖν, ὅτι πόρρωθεν αὐτῶν ὄντες οὐκ ἂν δύναιντο τὰ παρ᾽ ἑαυτῶν εἰσενεγκεῖν· τοιοῦτον γὰρ καὶ αὐτὴ τῶν νοσημάτων ἡ φύσις ἐκείνων. 2. Ἡμεῖς δὲ οὐχ ἕνα που καὶ δύο ἀλλὰ πάντας τοὺς κατὰ τὴν οἰκουμένην σκανδαλιζομένους θεραπεύειν ἐσπουδακότες οὐ δεόμεθά τινος τοιούτου. Οὐδὲ γὰρ εἰς οἶκον τινος τῶν νοσούντων εἰσελθεῖν αἰτοῦμεν, οὐδ᾽ ἔνθα κατάκεινται μαθεῖν, ἀλλ᾽ οὐδὲ αὐτοὺς τοὺς ἀρρώστους ἰδεῖν ἐπιζητοῦμεν. Οὐκ ὄργανα μεταχειρίζομεν, οὐ χρημάτων ποιούμεθα δαπάνην, τὰ πρὸς ἰατρείαν ὠνεῖσθαι κελεύοντες τοὺς ἀσθενοῦντας· 3. ἀλλὰ καὶν ἄγνωστοι ἡμιν ὦσι, κἂν πρὸς αὐτὰς ἀπῳκισμένοι τὰς τῆς οἰκουμένης ἐσχατιάς, κἂν ἐν μέσοις Βαρβάροις, κἂν ἐν αὐτῷ κείμενοι τῷ τῆς πτωχείας πυθμένι, κἂν πένητες τοσαύτην πενίαν ὥστε καὶ τῆς ἀναγκαίας ἀπορεῖν τροφῆς, οὐδεν ἡμιν τούτων πρὸς τὴν ἰατρείαν γίνεται κώλυμα· ἀλλ᾽ ἐνι ἱδρυμένοι χωρίῳ, χωρὶς ὀργάνων καὶ φαρμιάκων καὶ σιτίων καὶ ποτῶν καὶ χρημάτων καὶ μακρᾶς ἀποδημίας, τὴν νόσον ἀπελαύνομεν ταύτην. 4. Πῶς καὶ τίνι τρόπῳ ; τὸ τοῦ λόγου κατασκευάζοντες

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φάρμακον, τὸ ταῦτα πάντα γινόμενον τοῖς νοσοῦσι καὶ ἄμεινον ἢ τὰ εἰρημένα ἅπαντα. Καὶ γὰρ καὶ ἄρτου τρέφει μᾶλλον καὶ φαρμάκου διορθοῦται πλέον καὶ πυρὸς εὐτονώτερον καίει, ἀλγηδόνα μὲν οὐδεμίαν παρέχων, τῶν δὲ πονηρῶν λογισμῶν τὰ δυσώδη ῥεύματα ἀναστέλλων · καὶ σιδήρου τομώτερον τέμνει τὰ σεσηπότα ἀνωδύνως καὶ τοῦτο ποιοῦν δαπάνην οὐδεμίαν ἐργάζεται χρημάτων, οὐδὲ ἐπιτρίβει πενίαν. Τοῦτο οὖν κατασκευάσαντες τὸ φάρμακον, πᾶσι παραπεμπόμεθα καὶ πάντες, οἶδ' ὅτι, ἀπολαύσονται θεραπείας, μόνον εἰ τοῖς λεγομένοις μετὰ ἀκριβείας καὶ εὐγνωμοσύνης προσέχοιεν.

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Introduction

From John, archbishop of Constantinople, our father among the saints, to those troubled by the lawless deeds of recent days, that is, the pursuit and hoodwinking of the laity and many priests. A treatise concerning the providence and incomprehensibility of God.

1. Physicians intending to heal one suffering from a fever or some other kind of ailment first seek to see the ill person because they cannot offer their skills from a distance. Such is the nature of the physician's art and the character of those kind of diseases. 2. We, however, are committed to heal not only one or two sick people, but all who are appalled by the events occurring in the world. We have no need of something like this. That is to say, we don't ask to enter the house of the sick patient, nor to learn where he lies ill. In fact, we don't seek to visit the sick themselves. We don't wield medical instruments. We don't cause the expenditure of funds by commanding those who are sickly to buy the medicine they need to effect their healing.

3. Yet even if they should be unknown to us, even if they are settled at the utter extreme of the earth, even if they live in the midst of barbarians, even if they dwell in the

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depth of poverty, even if they are so poor that they lack necessary nourishment, none of these conditions are a hindrance to us for their healing. Though we are settled in one place, without medical instruments, medicines, food and drink, money, and far from home, we send this disease packing. 4. How and by what means? By preparing the medicine of the word, which is all these things for sick people and is better than all the things we have referred to. For this remedy nourishes more than bread, restores more effectively than a drug and cauterizes more powerfully than fire without causing any pain. At the same time it checks the foul-smelling tides of perverse reasonings. Sharper than iron, it painlessly cuts away the infected areas without causing any expenditure of money or deepening one's poverty. Therefore, having prepared this remedy, we are sending it to everyone. I know that all will benefit from this treatment, provided they set their thoughts on our words with thoroughness and good will.

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Κεφ. α΄. Ὅτι ἀναγκαῖον εἰπεῖν τὴν αἰτίαν ἀφ᾽ ἧς τὸ σκάνδαλον ἐτέχθη

1. Ἐπειδὴ δὲ καὶ ἐπὶ τῶν σωμάτων οὐ μικρόν, ἀλλὰ καὶ μέγιστον πρὸς τὴν τῆς ἀρρωστίας ἀπαλλαγὴν συντελεῖν εἴωθε τὸ μαθεῖν τὸν κάμνοντα τῆς ἀρρωστίας τὴν ὑπόθεσιν (οὐ γὰρ δὴ μόνον τῆς κατεχούσης αὐτὸν ἀπαλλαγήσεται νόσου τοῦτο μαθών, ἀλλ᾽ οὐδὲ μετὰ ταῦτα αὐτῇ περιπεσεῖται, τὴν αἰτίαν γνοὺς ἀφ᾽ ἧς αὐτῇ περιέπεσεν ἅπαξ καὶ φυλαττόμενος), φέρε καὶ ἡμεῖς τοῦτο πρῶτον τοὺς τὰ τοιαῦτα νοσοῦντας διδάξωμεν, πόθεν αὐτοῖς τὸ νόσημα τοῦτο γέγονε τοῦ σκανδάλου. 2. Εἰ γὰρ δὴ τοῦτο μάθοιεν, καὶ βουληθεῖεν φυλάξασθαι μετὰ ἀκριβείας αὐτό, οὐ ταύτης μόνον ἀπαλλαγήσονται τῆς ἀρρωστίας, οὐδὲ νυν μόνον, ἀλλὰ καὶ διηνεκῶς καὶ ταύτης καὶ ἑτέρων πλειόνων. Τοιαύτη γὰρ καὶ ἡ τοῦ φαρμάκου τούτου φύσις ἐστὶν ὡς καὶ τὸ παρὸν θεραπεῦσαι καὶ τῶν ἄλλων γενέσθαι προφυλακτικὸν παθῶν. 3. Οὐ γὰρ ἓν καὶ δύο καὶ τρία, ἀλλὰ καὶ πολλὰ κατὰ τὸν παρόντα βίον ἐστὶ τὰ σκανδαλίζοντα τοὺς ἀσθενεστέρους · καὶ τούτων ἁπάντων ὁ λόγος ἡμῶν ἐπαγγέλλεται τοὺς ἁλόντας ἐλευθεροῦν, μόνον εἰ βουληθεῖεν -- ὅπερ καὶ ἔμπροσθεν εἶπον -- καὶ μαθεῖν καὶ φυλάξαι τὰ λεγόμενα.

4. Ποιοῦμαι δὲ τὴν θεραπείαν ταύτην, οὐκ ἀπὸ τῶν θείων μόνον Γραφῶν συντιθείς, ἀλλὰ καὶ ἀπὸ τῶν κατὰ τὸν παρόντα βίον γινομένων καὶ συμβαινόντων διηνεκῶς · ὥστε καὶ τοῖς μὴ προσέχουσι Γραφαῖς κοινὴν γενέσθαι τὴν διόρθωσιν, εἰ βουληθεῖεν. 5. Οὐ γὰρ παύσομαι τοῦτο συνεχῶς ἐπιλέγων · Ἀνάγκῃ γὰρ καὶ βίᾳ καὶ μὴ βουλομένῳ οὐκ ἔνι ταύτην ποτὲ

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θεραπευθῆναι τὴν ἰατρείαν, καὶ τοὺς θείους μὴ καταδεχομένῳ χρησμούς · καὶ ἐντεῦθεν, καὶ μᾶλλον ἐντεῦθεν ἢ ἐκ τῆς τῶν πραγμάτων ἀποδείξεως.

6. Τῶν γὰρ ὁρωμένων ἀξιοπιστοτέραν δεῖ τὴν τοῦ θεοῦ ἀπόφασιν πιστεύειν εἶναι. Διά τοι τοῦτο καὶ χαλεπωτέρα τούτους μένει τιμωρία μὴ διορθουμένους, ὅτι δεξάμενοι τὰς Γραφάς, οὐδὲν ἐκεῖθεν εἰς τὴν τοιαύτην καρποῦνται ὠφέλειαν. Ἵν' οὖν μὴ τοῦτο πάσχωσι, φέρε ἀψώμεθα τῆς διορθώσεως λοιπόν, τὴν αἰτίαν εἰπόντες τοῦ νοσήματος πρῶτον.

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Chapter One

It is necessary to state the cause from which the scandal is generated.

1. Concerning physical bodies it is no small thing, but actually extremely important in the consummation of the healing process, for the one who is physically sick to discover the primary cause of his illness. This knowledge will not only free the sick person from the disease dwelling in him, but having learned these things he will avoid a relapse, knowing the cause by which he once fell into it and which knowledge now defends him. Let us first teach this to those suffering these things, that is, the source of this troubling illness which has happened to them. 2. For if they would learn this, and would willingly guard this knowledge with exactness, they will not only be delivered from this sickness in the present and the future, but also from many other illnesses. The nature of this remedy is such as to heal in the present and to be a protection against sufferings yet to come.

3. For it is not only one or two or three, but rather many things in this present life which trouble those who are weak. Our message promises to free those who are overpowered from all these things, *provided they are willing* -- which I have just said-- to learn and defend what we are

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saying. 4. I am concocting this treatment, not only by drawing from the Divine Scriptures, but also from the events which occur in this present life and which continually take place. In this way these events can be a correction even for those who do not pay attention to the Scriptures, provided they are willing. 5. For I will not stop continually repeating this: it is not possible to force or constrain this cure on anyone who does not wish to be healed and who does not receive the divine oracles. Our cure comes more from the Scriptures than from the demonstration derived from present circumstances. 6. It is necessary to believe that the declaration of God is more trustworthy than those things which can be seen with the naked eye. Because of this a more severe punishment remains for those who refuse to be corrected, for having accepted the Scriptures, they are reaping no benefit from them. Therefore, so that they may not suffer this punishment, now let us henceforward engage in this correction, first discussing the cause of this disease.

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Κεφ. β΄. Ὅτι ἐπισφαλὲς καὶ παραπληξίας ἀνάμεστον τὸ πολυπραγμονεῖν καὶ περιεργάζεσθαι τὴν ἀπόρρητον τοῦ Θεοῦ σοφίαν

1. Τίς οὖν ἡ αἰτία τῆς ἀρρωστίας τῆς τοσαύτης ἐστιν ; Ἡ πολυπράγμων καὶ περίεργος γνώμη, καὶ τὸ βούλεσθαι πάντων τῶν γινομένων εἰδέναι τὰς αἰτίας ἁπάσας, καὶ φιλονεικεῖν τὴν ἀκατάληπτον καὶ ἄρρητον τοῦ θεοῦ πρόνοιαν, τὴν ἀπέραντον καὶ ἀνεξιχνίαστον περιεργάζεσθαι ἀναισχύντως καὶ πολυπραγμονεῖν.
2. Καίτοι τίς τοῦ Παύλου σοφώτερος γέγονεν.; Εἰπὲ γάρ μοι, οὐ σκεῦος ἐκλογῆς ἦν οὗτος ; οὐ πολλὴν καὶ ἄφατον ἐπεσπάσατο τοῦ Πνεύματος τὴν χάριν ; οὐ τὸν Χριστὸν εἶχεν ἐν ἑαυτῷ λαλοῦντα ; οὐκ ἀπορρήτων ἐκοινώνησε τοῦ θεοῦ ῥημάτων ; οὐχ ἃ μηδενὶ ἀνθρώπων λαλῆσαι ἐξὸν ἦν, μόνος ἤκουσεν ἐκεῖνος ; οὐκ εἰς παράδεισον ἡρπάγη ; οὐκ εἰς τρίτον οὐρανὸν ἀνηνέχθη ; 3. οὐ γῆν καὶ θάλασσαν περιέδραμεν ; οὐ βαρβάρους φιλοσοφεῖν ἔπεισεν ; οὐ πολλὰς καὶ ποικίλας εἶχε τοῦ Πνεύματος ἐνεργείας ; οὐ δήμους ὁλοκλήρους καὶ πόλεις ἐρρύθμιζεν ; οὐ τὴν οἰκουμένην ἅπασαν εἰς χεῖρας αὐτῷ φέρων ἔθηκεν ὁ θεός ; Ἀλλ' ὅμως ὁ τοσοῦτος καὶ τηλικοῦτος, ὁ σοφὸς οὕτω καὶ δυνατὸς καὶ πνευματικὸς ἀνήρ, ὁ τοσούτων ἀπολελαυκώς, ὅταν εἰς τὴν ἐξέτασιν τῆς τοῦ θεοῦ προνοίας ἐμπέσῃ καὶ οὐδὲ ὁλοκλήρου προνοίας, ἀλλὰ μόνον εἰς μέρος αὐτῆς, ἄκουσον πῶς ἐκπλήττεται, πῶς ἰλιγγιᾷ, πῶς ἀποπηδᾷ ταχέως τῷ ἀκαταλήπτῳ παραχωρῶν.
4. Ὅτε οὖν ἐσκοπεῖτο, οὐχ ὅπως ἀγγέλων προνοεῖ καὶ

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ἀρχαγγέλων ὁ θεὸς καὶ τῶν χερουβεὶμ καὶ τῶν σεραφεὶμ καὶ τῶν ἄλλων ἀοράτων δυνάμεων, οὐδὲ πῶς ἡλίου καὶ σελήνης καὶ οὐρανοῦ καὶ γῆς καὶ θαλάσσης, οὐδὲ πῶς τοῦ γένους τῶν ἀνθρώπων παντός, οὐδὲ πῶς ἀλόγων καὶ φυτῶν καὶ σπερμάτων καὶ βοτανῶν καὶ ἀέρων καὶ πνευμάτων καὶ πηγῶν καὶ ποταμῶν, οὐδὲ τῆς κατὰ φύσιν γεννήσεως καὶ αὐξήσεως καὶ διατροφῆς καὶ τῶν ἄλλων τῶν τοιούτων, 5. ἀλλ' ἕν τι μέρος ἀπολαβὼν τῆς προνοίας αὐτοῦ τὸ κατὰ Ἰουδαίους καὶ Ἕλληνας -- καὶ γὰρ περὶ τούτων τὸν ἅπαντα διεξῇει λόγον, διδάσκων πῶς μὲν τοὺς ἐξ ἐθνῶν ἐκάλεσε, πῶς δὲ τοὺς ἐξ Ἰουδαίων ἀπώσατο καὶ πῶς ἐλέῳ τὴν ἑκατέρων σωτηρίαν ἐπραγματεύσατο -- ἄκουσον οἷά φησιν. 6. Ἰδὼν γὰρ πέλαγος ἀχανὲς ἀνεωχθέν, καὶ ἐν αὐτῷ τῷ μέρει τούτῳ καὶ πρὸς αὐτὸ τῆς προνοίας αὐτοῦ ταύτης τὸ βάθος διακύψαι βουληθείς, ὥσπερ τινὶ σκοτοδίνῳ κατασχεθεὶς τῷ ἀρρήτῳ τῆς οἰκονομίας ταύτης καὶ θαυμάσας καὶ ἐκπλαγεὶς τὸ ἄφατον, τὸ ἀπέραντον, τὸ ἄρρητον, τὸ ἀκατάληπτον τῆς τοῦ Θεοῦ σοφίας τε καὶ προνοίας, ἀπεπήδησε, ταύτας ἀφεὶς τὰς φωνὰς καὶ μετὰ πολλῆς τῆς ἐκπλήξεως ἀνακεκραγὼς ταῦτα τὰ ῥήματα · "Ὦ βάθος πλούτου καὶ σοφίας καὶ γνώσεως θεοῦ." 7. Εἶτα δεικνὺς ὅτι τὸ βάθος μὲν εἶδε, πόσον δὲ μαθεῖν οὐκ ἠδυνήθη, ἐπήγαγεν · "Ὡς ἀνεξερεύνητα τὰ κρίματα αὐτοῦ καὶ ἀνεξιχνίαστοι αἱ ὁδοὶ αὐτοῦ." Οὐκ εἶπεν ἀκατάληπτα μόνον, ἀλλὰ καὶ "Ἀνεξερεύνητα τὰ κρίματα αὐτοῦ." Οὐ μόνον γὰρ καταλαβεῖν τις οὐ δύναται, ἀλλ' οὐδὲ ἀρχὴν ἐρεύνης ποιήσασθαι · ὥστε οὐ μόνον εἰς τὸ πέρας τις ἐλθεῖν οὐκ ἰσχύει, ἀλλ' οὐδὲ τὴν ἀρξὴν ἐξιχνιάσαι τῶν οἰκονομιῶν αὐτοῦ

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8. Εἰπὼν δὲ · "Ὡς ἀνεξερεύνητα τὰ κρίματα αὐτοῦ, καὶ ἀνεζιχνίαστοι αἱ ὁδοὶ αὐτοῦ", καὶ θαυμάσας καὶ ἐκπλαγείς, εἰς δοξολογίαν τὸν λόγον κατέπαυσεν, οὕτως ἐπάγων καὶ λέγων · "Τίς ἔγνω νοῦν Κυρίου, ἢ τίς σύμβουλος αὐτοῦ ἐγένετο ; ἢ τίς προέδωκεν αὐτῷ, καὶ ἀνταποδοθήσεται αὐτῷ ; Ὅτι ἐξ αὐτοῦ καὶ δι᾽ αὐτοῦ καὶ εἰς αὐτὸν τὰ πάντα · αὐτῷ ἡ δοξα εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας. Ἀμήν." 9. Ὃ δὲ λέγει τοιοῦτόν ἐστιν · Αὐτὸς πηγή, αὐτος αἰτία τῶν ἀγαθῶν, οὐδενὸς δεῖται κοινωνοῦ, οὐδενὸς δεῖται συμβούλου · οὐ παρ᾽ ἑτέρου δανειζόμενος γνῶσιν ἢ σύνεσιν, πραγματεύεται καὶ θαυματουργεῖ · ἀλλ᾽ αὐτὸς δημιουργός, αὐτὸς αὐτὰ οὐκ ὄντα παρήγαγε, καὶ αὐτὸς παραχθέντα διακρατεῖ καὶ διακοσμεῖ καὶ διατηρεῖ ὡς βούλεται. 10. Τὸ γάρ · "Ἐξ αὐτοῦ καὶ δι᾽ αὐτοῦ καὶ εἰς αὐτὸν τὰ πάντα", τοῦτό ἐστι δηλοῦντος ὅτι αἴτιος τῶν ὄντων αὐτὸς καὶ δημιουργός καὶ διακρατῶν καὶ συνέχων τὰ πάντα. Εἶτα πάλιν τῆς δωρεᾶς μνησθεὶς τῆς εἰς ἡμας γεγενημένης, ἀλλαχοῦ λέγει : "Χάρις δὲ τῷ θεῷ ἐπὶ τῇ ἀνεκδιηγήτῳ αὐτοῦ δωρεᾷ." Καὶ τὴν εἰρήνην δὲ τὴν δοθεῖσαν ἡμῖν, οὐχὶ λόγον νικᾶν μόνον, οὐδὲ διήγησιν ὑπερβαίνειν, ἀλλὰ καὶ νοῦ παντὸς ἀνωτέραν εἶναι δηλοῖ, διὸ λέγει · "Ἡ εἰρήνη τοῦ θεοῦ, ἡ ὑπερέχουσα πάντα νοῦν, φρουρήσει τὰς καρδίας ὑμῶν." 11. Εἰ τοίνυν τὸ βάθος ἄπειρον τοῦ πλούτου καὶ τῆς σοφίας καὶ τῆς γνώσεως καὶ τὰ κρίματα αὐτοῦ ἀνεξερεύνητα καὶ αἱ ὁδοὶ αὐτοῦ ἀνεξιχνίαστοι καὶ ἡ δωρεὰ αὐτοῦ ἀνεκδιήγητος καὶ ἡ εἰρήνη ὑπερέχει πάντα νοῦν, οὐ τὸν ἐμὸν καὶ τὸν σὸν καὶ τοῦ δεινος, οὐδὲ τὸν τοῦ Παύλου καὶ Πέτρου μόνον, ἀλλὰ καὶ αὐτῶν τῶν

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ἀρχαγγέλων καὶ τῶν ἄνω δυνάμεων, ποίαν ἕξεις αὐτὸς ἀπολογίαν, εἰπέ μοι ; τίνα δὲ συγγνώμην, τοσαύτῃ κεχρημένος μανίᾳ καὶ ἀπονοίᾳ, τὰ ἀνεξιχνίαστα βουλόμενος καταλαβεῖν καὶ περὶ πάσης τῆς τοῦ Θεοῦ προνοίας λόγον ἀπαιτῶν ;

12. Εἰ γὰρ ὁ τοσαύτης ἀπολελαυκὼς γνώσεως καὶ παρρησίαν οὕτως ἄφατον ἔχων καὶ τῶν τοσούτων χαρισμάτων ἐμπεπλησμένος Παῦλος παραχωρεῖ καὶ ἐξίσταται τῆς ὑπὸ τὴν ζήτησιν γνώσεως καὶ οὐ μόνον εὑρεῖν οὐ δύναται, ἀλλ᾽ οὐδὲ ἐρευνῆσαι τὴν ἀρχήν, ἐπεὶ μηδὲ δυνατόν, πῶς οὐ πάντων ἀθλιώτερος καὶ τὴν χαλεπωτάτην μαινόμενος μανίαν, ὁ τὴν ἐναντίαν ὁδὸν ἐρχόμενος ἐκείνῳ ; 13. Οὐδὲ γὰρ ταῦτα εἴρηκε μόνον, ἀλλὰ καὶ περὶ γνώσεώς ποτε Κορινθίοις ἐπιστέλλων, καὶ δεικνὺς ὅπως, εἰ καὶ πολλὰ μεμαθήκαμεν, ἀλλ᾽ ὀλίγον καὶ σφόδρα ἐλάχιστον μέτρον γνώσεως ἔχομεν, οὕτω πώς φησιν ; "Εἴ τις δοκεῖ ἐγνωκέναι τι, οὔπω εἶδε καθὼς δεῖ γνῶναι." Εἶτα δηλῶν ὅτι πολὺ λείπει τῆς γνώσεως ἡμῖν καὶ τὸ πλέον ἐν τῷ μέλλοντι τεταμίευται χρόνῳ, ὀλίγον δέ τι ἡμῖν δέδοται, ἐπήγαγεν ·

"Ἐκ μέρους γινώσκομεν καὶ ἐκ μέρους προφητεύομεν. Ὅταν δὲ ἔλθῃ τὸ τέλειον, τότε τὸ ἐκ μέρους καταργηθήσεται."

14. Καὶ οὐδὲ ἐνταῦθα ἔστη, ἀλλὰ δεῖξαι βουλόμενος πόσον τὸ μέσον ταύτης κἀκείνης τῆς γνώσεως καὶ ὅτι πολὺ τὸ λειπόμενον, διὰ εἰκόνων τινῶν σαφὲς τοῦτο ποιεῖ λέγων ·

"Ὅτε ἤμην νήπιος, ὡς νήπιος ἐλάλουν, ὡς νήπιος ἐφρόνουν, ὡς νήπιος ἐλογιζόμην · ὅτε δὲ γέγονα ἀνήρ, τὰ τοῦ νηπίου κατήργηκα. Βλέπομεν γάρ ἄρτι δι᾽ ἐσόπτρου ἐν αἰνίγματι, τότε δὲ πρόσωπον πρὸς πρόσωπον."

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15. Εἶδες πόσον τὸ μέσον ; Ὅσον νηπίου παιδὸς καὶ ἀνδρὸς τελείου · ὅσον ἐσόπτρου καὶ αἰνίγματος καὶ τῆς ἄλλης τῆς ἀσαφοῦς τῶν πραγμάτων ὄψεως πρὸς σαφῆ ὄψιν · τοῦτο γάρ ἐστι τὸ "πρόσωπον". Τί οὖν μαίνῃ καὶ λυττᾷς, τῶν κεκωλυμένων κατατολμῶν εἰκῇ καὶ μάτην ; τί δὲ οὐ πείθῃ Παύλῳ λέγοντι · "Μενοῦν γε σὺ τίς εἶ, ἄνθρωπε, ὁ ἀνταποκρινόμενος τῷ Θεῷ ; Μὴ ἐρεῖ τὸ πλάσμα τῷ πλάσαντι · Τί με ἐποίησας οὕτως ; "
16. Ὁρᾷς πόσην ἀπαιτει τὴν ὑπακοήν ; πόσην τὴν σιγήν ; Οὐ γὰρ δὴ τὸ αὐτεξούσιον ἡμῶν ἀναιρῶν τοῦτο λέγει · μὴ γένοιτο · ἀλλὰ δηλῶν ὅτι τὸν ταῦτα ζητοῦντα οὕτως ἄφωνον εἶναι δεῖ, ὡς ἡ τοῦ πηλοῦ φύσις, ἑπομένη ᾗπερ ἂν ὁ τεχνίτης ἄγῃ, μὴ ἀντιτείνοντα, μηδὲ περιεργαζόμενον. Διὸ καὶ τῆς φύσεως ἡμᾶς ἀναμιμνῄσκει τῆς ἡμετέρας, καὶ πηλοῦ μέμνηται καὶ κεραμέως. Καίτοι γε κεραμέως καὶ πηλοῦ ἡ αὐτὴ οὐσία.
17. Εἰ δὲ ἔνθα ἡ αὐτὴ οὐσία, τοσαύτη ἡ ὑπακοή · ἔνθα ἄπειρον τὸ μέσον καὶ οὐσίας καὶ γνώσεως καὶ τῶν ἄλλων ἁπάντων, ποίας τεύξεται συγγνώμης ὁ οὕτως ἰταμὸς καὶ ἀναιδὴς ὥστε πολυπραγμονεῖν τὰ τοῦ πεποιηκότος αὐτὸν θεοῦ ; Ἐννόησον, ὦ ἄνθρωπε, τίς εἶ · Τοῦτο γὰρ δηλοῖ δι ὧν λέγει · "Σὺ τίς εἶ ;" Οὐχὶ πηλός ; οὐχὶ τέφρα καὶ σποδὸς ; οὐχὶ κόνις ; οὐ καπνός ; οὐ χόρτος ; οὐκ ἄνθος χορτου ;
18. Ταύτας γὰρ πάσας τὰς εἰκόνας εἰς μέσον οἱ προφῆται συνεχῶς φέρουσι, τὴν εὐτέλειαν ἡμῶν τῆς φύσεως παραστῆσαι φιλονεικοῦντες. Ὁ δὲ πολυπραγμονούμενος ὑπὸ σοῦ, ἀνώλεθρος, ἀναλλοίωτος, ἀεὶ ὢν καὶ ὡσαύτως ὤν, ἄναρχος, ἀτελεύτητος, ἀπερινόητος, ὑπερβαίνων νοῦν, νικῶν λογισμόν,

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ἀνέκφραστος, ἄρρητος, ἀκατάληπτος οὐκ ἐμοὶ καὶ σοὶ μόνον καὶ προφήταις καὶ ἀποστόλοις, ἀλλὰ καὶ ταῖς ἄνω δυναμέσι, ταῖς καθαραῖς, ταῖς ἀοράτοις, ταῖς ἀσωμάτοις, ταῖς διηνεκῶς ἐν οὐρανῷ διατριβούσαις.

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Chapter Two

It is precarious and absolutely insane to be unduly inquisitive and curious about the unutterable wisdom of God.

1. What, therefore, is the cause of such a sickness? A curious mind preoccupied with vain questions, one that wants to understand all the causes of everything that comes to pass and to strive contentiously with the incomprehensible and ineffable providence of God. It shamelessly scrutinizes and concerns itself with a subject which in its very nature is infinite and untraceable. Indeed, who was wiser than Paul? Tell me, wasn't he a chosen vessel? Didn't he draw to himself the abundant and unutterable grace of the Spirit? Wasn't Christ speaking through him? Didn't he share with him the inexpressible words of God? Didn't only he hear things which normally surpass the possibilities of human perception? Wasn't he snatched up to paradise? Wasn't he lifted up to the third heaven? 3. Didn't he travel over land and sea? Didn't he persuade barbarian peoples to become Christians? Didn't he experience numerous and varied operations of the Spirit? Didn't he establish order among entire peoples and cities? Didn't God deliver the entire world into his hands? Nevertheless, such a very great man, so wise, powerful, and spiritual, one who enjoyed such priviliges, when he began to reflect upon the providence of

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God -- not God's providence in its entirety, but only one of its aspects -- listen to how amazed he is, how his head begins to swim, how quickly he turns away, retreating before the incomprehensible. 4. Therefore, when Paul contemplates the providence of God -- not how God watches over angels, archangels, cherubim, seraphim, and the other invisible powers, nor how he cares for the sun, moon, heaven, and earth, nor how he provides for all the races of humanity, nor how he looks after things created without the ability to reason, plants, seeds, the grass of the field, air and wind, springs and rivers, nor for their birth, growth, and sustenance according to the laws of nature, nor concerning other things such as these -- 5. but having selected only one aspect of God's providence as his focus, that dealing with the Jews and the Gentiles -- for concerning these he composed an entire discourse, teaching how God called the Gentiles and rejected the Jews and how, through his mercy, he worked to accomplish the salvation of both groups -- listen to what he says. 6. For having seen a vast ocean open up pertaining to this very point and desiring to scrutinize the depth of this providence, Paul was overcome by a kind of dizziness before the impossibility of ever explaining it. Astonished and amazed at the inexpressible, boundless, unutterable, incomprehensible wisdom and providence of God, he turned away, having exclaimed these words and in a great stupour having cried out: "O the depth

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of the of the wealth and wisdom and knowledge of God."[1] Thereupon, demonstrating that he recognized the depth, but could not comprehend its greatness, he added: "How unsearchable are his judgments and how inscrutable his ways."[2] He didn't say simply "incomprehensible," but also that "his judgments are unsearchable." That is, one is not only unable to fathom them, but one can't even commence an effective inquiry. We not only lack the capability of reaching their end, but can't even trace out the origin of his plans. 8. After having said: "How unsearchable are his judgments, and inscrutable his ways," astonished and amazed, he ended the discourse with a doxology which he introduces by saying: "Who has known the mind of the Lord, or who has become his counsellor? Or who has given to him and will be recompensed by him? For from him and through him and unto him are all things. Glory to him forever and ever. Amen."[3] 9. Now what he is saying is this: he is the source, he is the cause of good things; he has no need of any partner or counsellor. He works and produces wonders without borrowing knowledge or understanding from another. But he himself is the beginning, cause, and source of all good things. He himself is the creator. He himself has created that which had no existence. He himself controls, orders, and

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[1] Romans 11: 33

[2] Romans 11: 33

[3] Romans 11: 34-36

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preserves the things he has created according to his own will. 10. For "from him and through him and unto him are all things."[4] Paul here declares that God himself is the origin and maker of all created existence, governing and holding all things together. Then, again reminded of the gift created for us, he says in another place: "Now thanks be to God for his indescribable gift."[5] In addition, he declares that this peace which was given to us not only prevails over the spoken and written word and surpasses every description, but is also higher than every thought. This is why he says: "The peace of God which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts."[6] 11. If, therefore, the depth of God's riches, wisdom, and knowledge is boundless, if his judgments are unsearchable and his ways inscrutable, if his gift is indescribable and his peace surpasses all understanding, not only mine or yours or that of anyone, not only that of Peter or Paul, but even the understanding of the archangels and the powers above, tell me what kind of defense or pardon you will have for submitting yourself to such madness and folly, desiring to comprehend the unsearchable and demanding an explanation of God's provident acts? 12. For if Paul, who enjoyed the benefit of such a knowledge of the things of God, who had an

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[4] Romans 11: 36

[5] 2 Cor. 9: 15

[6] Philippians 4: 7

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unspeakable confidence and was filled with such gifts, draws back and is driven dizzy by the quest for this knowledge, if he not only cannot find it, but is unable to search out its beginning, since this is not possible, how is the one following a path opposite to that of Paul not more wretched than all and stark-staring mad? 13. Paul did not limit himself to these words, but when writing to the Corinthians concerning the knowledge of the things of God demonstrates how, though we have learned many things, we still have only a very small, even tiny measure of knowledge. He expresses himself something like this: "If anyone thinks he knows something, he does not yet know as he ought to know."[7] He goes on to demonstrate that our present knowledge is grossly deficient and that complete knowledge is reserved for the age to come. Only a very small amount has been given to us at the present time. "For now we know in part and prophesy in part. But when the perfect comes, then that which is partial will be done away."[8] 14. Paul does not stop here, but desiring to illustrate that the distance between this present knowledge and that of the future is great and that much remains to be made known, he employs various images to make this clear: "When I was a child, I spoke as a child, I thought as a child, I reasoned as a child. But when I

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[7] 1 Cor. 8: 2

[8] 1 Cor. 13: 9-10

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became a man, I put away childish things. For we now see in images by means of a mirror, but then face to face."[9] 15. Do you see how great is the distance between these two kinds of knowledge? It is as great as the difference between an infant child and a mature man or like an image seen in a mirror, one where the vision of things is faint or indistinct in comparison with clear sight. This is what Paul means when he writes "face to face." Why, then, do you rage and rave, acting heedlessly and vainly toward forbidden things? Why aren't you persuaded by Paul when he says: "Indeed, who are you, O man, you who answer back to God? Will the clay say to the potter, 'Why have you made me this way?'"[10] 16. Do you see how great is the obedience he demands? How great the silence? He is certainly not destroying our free will by saying this. May it never be! Rather, he is declaring that the one seeking these things must be speechless, just as it is the nature of clay to be, following wherever the artist leads, not resisting, not prying into things. And so he reminds us of our own nature, making mention of the clay and the potter. Indeed, in this illustration the clay and the potter share the same nature. 17. But where there is an identity in nature there is a corresponding obedience. Where the distance is infinite as

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[9] 1 Cor. 13: 11-12a

[10] Romans 9: 20

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far as essence, knowledge, and all other things are concerned, what kind of forgiveness will one obtain who is so headstrong and shameless as to pry into the decisions of the God who created him? Consider, O human, who you are. Paul explains this when he writes: "Who are you? Are you not clay? Are you not ashes and embers? Are you not dust? Are you not smoke? Are you not grass? Are you not like flowers of the field?" 18. For the prophets continually evoke all these figures of speech to illustrate the difference between human nature and the divine nature. They compete with one another in demonstrating the inferiority of our nature. But the one you expose to your insatiable curiosity is indestructible, unchanging, always exists and exists in the same manner, without beginning, without end, unfathomable, surpassing human thought, challenging false ideas, inexpressible, indescribable, incomprehensible, not only to me, you, prophets and apostles, but even to the powers above, who are pure, invisible, incorporeal, and dwell continuously in heaven.

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Κεφ. γ΄. Ὅτι οὐχ ἡμῖν μόνον ἀλλὰ καὶ ταῖς ἄνω δυναμέσιν ἀκατάληπτον τὸ θεῖον

1. Ὅταν οὖν ἴδῃς τὰ σεραφεὶμ τὰ περιιπτάμενα τὸν θρόνον τὸν ὑψηλὸν ἐκεῖνον καὶ ἐπηρμένον, τῇ προβολῇ τῶν πτερύγων ἀποτειχίζοντα τὰς ἑαυτῶν ὄψεις καὶ τοὺς πόδας καλύπτοντα καὶ νῶτα καὶ πρόσωπα καὶ κραυγὴν ἀφιέντα ἐκπληξεως γέμουσαν, μὴ πτερὰ νόμιζε καὶ πόδας καὶ πτέρυγας αὐτοῖς εἶναι · 2. ἀόρατοι γὰρ αἱ δυνάμεις ἐκεῖναι · ἀλλὰ διὰ τῶν εἰκόνων τούτων τὸ ἀπρόσιτον, τὸ ἀκατάληπτον τοῦ καθημένου ἐπὶ τοῦ θρόνου λογίζου. Καὶ γὰρ καὶ ἐκείναις ἀκατάληπτος καὶ ἀπρόσιτός ἐστι, καίτοι συγκαταβαίνων · οὐδὲ γὰρ ὅπερ ἦν ἐφαίνετο τότε. Θεὸς γὰρ οὐ κάθηται, οὐδὲ θρόνῳ περιέχεται, οὐδὲ τόπῳ περιείληπται. 3. Εἰ δὲ καθήμενον καὶ ἐπὶ θρόνου ἱδρυμένον καὶ κυκλούμενον ὑπ᾽ αὐτῶν -- ἅπερ ἐστὶν ἅπαντα συγκαταβαίνοντος, οὐ καθημένου -- οὐκ ἴσχυσαν ἰδεῖν, ἀλλὰ μὴ φέρουσαι τὴν ἐκεῖθεν ἐκπηδῶσαν ἀστραπήν, τῇ προβολῇ τῶν πτερύγων τὰς ὄψεις ἀπετείχιζον καὶ μόνον ἐδοξολόγουν, μόνον ὕμνουν μετὰ πολλῆς τῆς φρίκης τὸ μυστικὸν ἐκεῖνο τοῦ ἁγιασμοῦ ἀναφέρουσαι μέλος · 4. Οὐκ ἀπελθὼν κατορύξεις σεαυτὸν καὶ καταδύσεις, τῆς ἀρρήτου καὶ ἀφράστου καὶ ταῖς ἄνω δυνάμεσιν ἀκαταλήπτου θεοῦ δυνάμεως τὴν πρόνοιαν μετὰ τοσαύτης περιεργάζεσθαι βουλόμενος τῆς ἰταμότητος ; 5. Τὰ γὰρ ἐκείνου Υἱῷ καὶ Πνεύματι ἁγίῳ δῆλα μόνον ἅπαντα μετ᾽ ἀκριβείας, ἑτέρῳ δὲ οὐδενί · καὶ τούτων τὸ μὲν Ἰωάννης ὁ εὐαγγελιστής, τῷ δὲ Παῦλος ὁ ἀπόστολος παρεδήλωσεν. Ὁ μὲν οὖν τῆς βροντῆς υἱὸς καὶ σφόδρα ἐπέραστος ὢν τῷ Χριστῷ καὶ

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τοῦτο παράσημον ἔχων, ὅπερ ἦν μεγίστης ἀρετῆς ἀπόδειξις καὶ τοσαύτης ἀπολαύων παρρησίας ὡς καὶ ἐπὶ τὸ στῆθος αὐτοῦ κατακλίνεσθαι, οὕτω φησί · "Θεὸν οὐδεὶς ἑώρακε πώποτε", ὅρασιν τὴν γνῶσιν λέγων · 6. "Ὁ μονογενὴς Υἱὸς ὁ ὢν εἰς τὸν κόλπον τοῦ Πατρός, ἐκεῖνος ἐξηγήσατο." Τοῦτο καὶ ὁ Χριστὸς δηλοποιῶν δι' ἑαυτοῦ πάλαι τῷ δήμῳ τῶν Ἑβραίων διαλεγόμενός φησιν · "Οὐδεὶς ἑώρακε τὸν Πατέρα, εἰ μὴ ὁ ὢν ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ · οὗτος ἑώρακε τὸν Πατέρα."

7. Τὸ δὲ σκεῦος τῆς ἐκλογῆς εἰς τὸν τῆς οἰκονομίας αὐτοῦ λόγον ἐμπεσὼν καὶ τὰ ἀπόρρητα, ἅπερ ἔμαθεν, ἅπαντα βουλόμενος εἰπεῖν, πῶς αὐτὰ ἔγνω, οὕτω λέγει · "Λαλοῦμεν δὲ σοφίαν ἐν μυστηρίῳ, τὴν ἀποκεκρυμμένην, ἣν προώρισεν ὁ Θεὸς πρὸ τῶν αἰώνων, εἰς δόξαν ἡμῶν, ἣν οὐδεὶς τῶν ἀρχόντων τοῦ αἰῶνος τούτου ἔγνω. 8. Εἰ γὰρ ἔγνωσαν, οὐκ ἂν τὸν Κύριον τῆς δόξης ἐσταύρωσαν. Ἀλλά, καθὼς γέγραπται, ἃ ὀφθαλμὸς οὐκ εἶδε καὶ οὖς οὐκ ἤκουσε καὶ ἐπὶ καρδίαν ἀνθρώπου οὐκ ἀνέβη, ἃ ἡτοίμασεν ὁ θεὸς τοῖς ἀγαπῶσιν αὐτόν." Πῶς οὖν αὐτὰ ἔγνωμεν ἡμεῖς, ὦ Παῦλε ; τίς ὁ μηνύσας καὶ δῆλα καταστήσας αὐτὰ τὰ ἀθέατα, τὰ ἀνήκουστα, τὰ εἰς καρδίαν ἀνθρώπου μὴ ἀναβάντα ; 9. Εἰπὲ καὶ δεῖξον τίς ὁ τοσαύτην ἡμῖν γνῶσιν κομίσας. "Ἡμῖν δὲ, φησίν, ὁ θεὸς ἀπεκάλυψε διὰ τοῦ Πνεύματος αὐτοῦ." Εἶτα ἵνα μή τις νομίσῃ ὅτι ταῦτα μόνον ἐπίσταται, ἅπερ ἀπεκάλυψεν ἡμῖν ὁ θεὸς δι' αὐτοῦ, οὐχὶ δὲ καὶ πᾶσαν ἔχει τὴν γνῶσιν, ἐπήγαγε · "Τὸ γὰρ πνεῦμα πάντα ἐρευνᾷ, καὶ τὰ βάθη τοῦ θεοῦ. Τίς γὰρ οἶδεν ἀνθρώπων τὰ τοῦ ἀνθρώπου, εἰ μὴ τὸ πνεῦμα τοῦ ἀνθρώπου τὸ ἐν αὐτῷ ; οὕτω καὶ τὰ τοῦ θεοῦ οὐδεὶς οἶδεν, εἰ μὴ τὸ Πνεῦμα τοῦ Θεοῦ." Ὃ

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δὲ λέγει τοιοῦτόν ἐστιν · Ὥσπερ ἄνθρωπος αὐτὸς οἶδε τὰ ἑαυτοῦ καὶ ἃ βουλεύεται καὶ ἐν διανοίᾳ ἔχει, μετὰ ἀκριβείας ἐπίσταται πάντα, οὕτω καὶ τὸ Πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον μετὰ ἀκριβείας οἶδε τοῦ θεοῦ τὴν ἀπόρρητον γνῶσιν ἅπασαν.

10. Εἰπὼν τοίνυν · "Οὕτω καὶ τὰ τοῦ θεοῦ οὐδεὶς οἶδεν, εἰ μὴ τὸ Πνεῦμα τοῦ θεοῦ" οὐκ ἀνθρώπους μόνον, ἀλλὰ καὶ τὴν ἄνω κτίσιν τῆς ἀκριβοῦς ταύτης ἐξέβαλε γνώσεως. Διὸ καὶ σοφός τις παραινεῖ λόγος · "Χαλεπώτερά σου μὴ ζήτει καὶ ἰσχυρότερά σου μὴ ἐξέταζε · ἃ προσετάγη σοι, ταῦτα διανοοῦ · πλείονα γὰρ συνέσεως ἀνθρώπων ὑπεδείχθη σοι."

11. Ὁ δὲ λέγει τοιοῦτόν ἐστιν · Οὐδὲ ταῦτα ἅπερ ἔχεις, οἴκοθεν μαθὼν ἔχεις ἅπαντα, οὐδὲ ἤρκεσέ σοι ἡ φύσις πρὸς τὴν τῶν ἁπάντων εἴδησιν, ἀλλ' ἄνωθεν τῶν πλειόνων ἔλαβες τὴν γνῶσιν · πολλῷ γὰρ μείζονα ἦν ἢ ὥστε τῇ συνέσει καταληφθῆναι τῇ σῇ. Τί τοίνυν οἴκοθεν φιλονεικεῖς τὰ βαθύτερα ἐρευνᾶν, ὅταν καὶ αὐτῶν ὧν οἶδας πολλὰ ὑπερβαίνῃ σου τὴν φρόνησιν καὶ ταῦτα ἑτέρωθεν ἔχῃς ; 12. Τοῦτο καὶ ὁ Παῦλος παραδηλῶν ἔλεγε · "Τί γὰρ ἔχεις ὃ οὐκ ἔλαβες ; εἰ δὲ καὶ ἔλαβες, τί καυχᾶσαι ὡς μὴ λαβών ;" Παῦσαι τοίνυν ὀψὲ γοῦν ποτε τῆς τοσαύτης φιλονεικίας καὶ ἀνέχου τῆς σοφωτάτης συμβουλῆς ἐκείνης τῆς λεγούσης · "Μὴ εἴπῃς · Τί τοῦτο ; εἰς τί τοῦτο; πάντα γὰρ εἰς χρείαν αὐτῶν ἔκτισται."

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Chapter Three

The divine nature is not only incomprehensible to us, but also to the powers above.

1. When you see the seraphim flying around that lofty and exalted throne, using their wings to protect their eyes, shielding their feet, backs, and faces, rending the air with cries of consternation, do not suppose that they actually have feathers, wings, and feet. 2. For those powers are invisible. Instead, by means of these images consider the unapproachableness and the incomprehensibility of the one who sits on the throne. For even to those angelic powers he is incomprehensible and unapproachable, although he willingly condescends to come down to our level of understanding. Indeed, the vision does not correspond to his true nature. God is not actually sitting. He does not sit on a throne, nor is he enclosed in a specific place. 3. Even if he is sitting and seated on a throne and surrounded by angelic powers -- all these are signs of condescension and don't represent one genuinely seated -- they were unable to look at him, but instead could not bear the lightning which lept forth and protected their eyes with their wings. They were only able to glorify him, with a holy dread singing a mysterious melody to exalt his holiness.

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4. Won't you go away and bury yourself, won't you hide yourself under the ground, you who audaciously desire to pry into the providence of a God whose power is indescribable, unutterable, and incomprehensible, even to the spiritual powers above? 5. For all things concerning him are precisely known solely by the Son and Holy Spirit and by no one else. John the Evangelist discussed the first of these truths, while Paul the Apostle commented on the second. Indeed, the Son of Thunder, especially loved by Christ and having this title as a mark of distinction, a demonstration of his great virtue, one who enjoyed such confidence so as to lean against his breast, speaks this way: "No one has seen God at any time," understanding vision as knowledge. 6. "The only begotten Son who is in the bosom of the Father, that one has made him known." Formerly Christ himself made this clear to the Hebrew people as he reasoned with them: "No one has seen the Father, except the one who is from the Father. This one has seen the Father." 7. The vessel of election, having briefly alluded to the plan and secrets of God which he had learned and desiring to explain how he had come to know them expresses himself in this way: "We speak of wisdom in a mystery, a wisdom that has been hidden, which God destined for our glory before the ages, which none of the rulers of this age understood. 8. For if they had understood, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. But, just as it is written, what eye has not seen

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and ear has not heard, nor has risen in the human heart, these things God has prepared for those who love him."[1] Paul, how have we come to know these matters? Who has revealed and clarified these unseen and unheard-of things, subjects which have never arisen in the human heart? 9. Tell us and show us who has provided such knowledge for us. "For to us," he says, "God has revealed it through his Spirit."[2] Then, so that no one will suppose that the Spirit's knowledge is limited to these things, that is, to those things which God has revealed to us through the Spirit and that he does not have complete knowledge, Paul adds: "For the Spirit searches out all things, even the deep things of God. For who among humankind knows the thoughts of a human being except that person's own spirit? In the same way, no one knows those things which concern God except the Spirit of God."[3] The sense of Paul's words is this: just as a person has a precise knowledge of those things which concern himself, what he wants to do and what he has in mind, so the Spirit has an exact understanding of all the inexpressible knowledge of God. 10. So by saying "In the same way no one knows the things of God, except the Spirit of God," Paul excludes from this precise knowledge not only human beings, but also every created being above.

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[1] 1 Cor. 2: 7-9

[2] 1 Cor. 2: 10

[3] 1 Cor. 2: 10-11

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Therefore, a certain wise word counsels: "Don't seek after things too difficult for you nor scrutinize things mightier than you. Meditate on those things which have been appointed for you. For things beyond human understanding have been shown you."[4] 11. Tne writer's meaning is this: you have not learned all the things which you now understand from your own nature, nor is human nature capable of understanding all these things. Rather, you have received the greater part of the knowledge of these matters from above, because this knowledge is much too immense to be grasped by your understanding. Why, then, do you ardently strive to peruse the deeper things from a human perspective, when many of the things you do understand surpass your comprehension, having received it from another? 12. This is what Paul indicated when he said: "For what do you have that you did not receive? And if you received it, why do you boast as though you did not?"[5] Consequently, at last put an end to this obstinacy and accept that wise advice which says: "Don't say, 'What does this mean? Why is that? For all things have been created for their own purpose."[6]

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[4] Ecclesiasticus 3: 22-23

[5] 1 Cor. 4: 7

[6] Ecclesiasticus 39: 21

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Κεφ. δ΄ Ὅτι καὶ ὁ προφήτης Μωυσῆς τὴν περιεργίαν τὴν ἐπισφαλῆ ἐν προοιμίοις τοῦ βιβλίου δι᾽ ἑνὸς ἀνείλε ῥήματος

1. Διὰ γάρ τοι τοῦτο, ἐπειδὴ πᾶσα ἡ κτίσις ἐγένετο καὶ τὸν οἰκεῖον κόσμον ἀπέλαβε καὶ τὸ παναρμόνιον τοῦτο καὶ παράδοξον καὶ πολλῆς γέμον ἐκπλήξεως ἔργον εἰς μέσον προὔκειτο, ἔμελλον δὲ πολλοὶ τῶν ἀνοήτων καὶ μαινομένων ἐπιλαμβάνεσθαι τῶν γενομένων, ὅρα πῶς προαναστέλλων αὐτῶν τὴν ἄκαιρον κρίσιν καὶ μανιώδη ψῆφον, ἑνὶ ῥήματι πᾶσαν ἀναίσχυντον ἐνέφραξε γλῶσσαν ὁ νομοθέτης εἰπών · "Εἶδεν ὁ θεὸς πάντα ὅσα ἐποίησε, καὶ ἰδοὺ καλὰ λίαν." 2. Ἐπειδὴ γὰρ ἐν τοῖς ὁρωμένοις ἦν οὐχὶ φῶς μόνον, ἀλλὰ καὶ σκότος · οὐ καρποὶ μόνον, ἀλλὰ καὶ ἄκανθαι · οὐ δένδρα ἥμερα, ἀλλὰ καὶ ἄγρια · οὐχ ὕπτια πεδία, ἀλλὰ καὶ ἑρπετὰ ἰοβόλα · οὐκ ἰχθύες μόνον, ἀλλὰ καὶ κήτη · οὐχ ἥμερα πελάγη, ἀλλὰ καὶ ἄπλωτος θάλασσα · 3. οὐχ ἥλιος μόνον καὶ σελήνη καὶ ἄστρα, ἀλλὰ καὶ κεραυνοὶ καὶ πρηστῆρες · οὐκ ἄνεμοι μόνον προσηνεῖς, ἀλλὰ καὶ καταιγίδες · οὐ περιστεραὶ μόνον καὶ ὄρνιθες ᾠδικοί, ἀλλὰ καὶ ἱκτῖνες καὶ ἱέρακες καὶ γυπες καὶ ἕτερα ἀνθρωποφάγα ζῷα · οὐ πρόβατα καὶ βόες, ἀλλὰ καὶ λύκοι καὶ παρδάλεις καὶ λέοντες · οὐκ ἔλαφοι καὶ λαγῳμοὶ καὶ δορκάδες, ἀλλὰ καὶ σκορπίοι καὶ ἔχεις καὶ δράκοντες · καὶ ἐν βοτάναις δὲ οὐχὶ σωτήρια μόνον φυτά, ἀλλὰ καὶ δηλητήρια, καὶ πολλοὶ ἐκ τούτων σκανδαλίζεσθαι ἔμελλον καὶ αἱρέσεις τίκτειν.

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4. Μετὰ τὸ γενέσθαι τὰ γενόμενα καὶ τὸν οἰκεῖον ἕκαστον ἀπολαβεῖν κόσμον, καθ᾽ ἕκαστον δείκνυσι τὸν δημιουργὸν ἐπαινοῦντα τὸ γεγενημένον, μᾶλλον δὲ καθ᾽ ἕνα αὐτῶν καὶ κοινῇ πάντα, ἵνα τὴν ἐκείνου κρίσιν μαθών, κἂν σφόδρα τις ἰταμὸς καὶ ἀναίσχυντος ᾖ, μηδὲν περιεργάζηται λοιπὸν τῶν ὁρωμένων. 5. Διὰ τοῦτο εἰπὼν ὅτι ἐγένετο φῶς, ἐπήγαγε · "Καὶ εἶδεν ὁ θεὸς τὸ φῶς ὅτι καλόν", καὶ καθ᾽ ἕκαστον οὕτως. Εἶτα ἵνα μὴ πάντα κατ᾽ ὄνομα εἰπὼν μηκύνῃ τὸν λόγον, ὁμοῦ περὶ πάντων ἀποφαίνεται ἅπαξαπλῶς καὶ ἰδοὺ καλὰ λίαν. "
6. Οὐκ ἐπειδὴ μετὰ τὸ γενέσθαι ἔγνω ὁ θεὸς ὅτι καλὸν τὸ γενόμενον · ἄπαγε. Εἰ γὰρ τεχνίτης ἄνθρωπος καὶ πρὸ τοῦ γενέσθαι τὰ τῆς τέχνης μαθὼν οἶδεν ὅτι καλὰ τὰ παρ᾽ αὐτοῦ μέλλοντα γίνεσθαι, πολλῷ μᾶλλον ἡ ἄρρητος ἐκείνη σοφία βουλήματι μόνῳ τὰ πάντα παραγαγοῦσα καὶ πρὸ τῆς γεννήσεως ᾔδει ὅτι καλά. 7. Οὐδὲ γὰρ ἂν αὐτὰ παρήγαγεν, εἰ᾽ ἠγνόει. Τίνος οὖν ἕνεκεν οὕτως εἴρηται ; Διὰ τὴν αἰτίαν ἣν εἶπον. Ἀκούσας τοίνυν τοῦ προφήτου πρὸς σὲ λέγοντος ὅτι ὁ θεὸς αὐτὰ εἶδε καὶ ἐπῆνεσε, μὴ ζήτει λοιπὸν ἑτέραν βάσανον καὶ ἀπόδειξιν τοῦ κάλλους αὐτῶν, μηδὲ λέγε · Πῶς καλά ; Τῆς γὰρ διὰ τῶν ἔργων ἀποδείξεως σαφεστέρα ἡ διὰ τῆς ψήφου καὶ τῆς κρίσεως τοῦ ποιήσαντος ἀπόφασις. 8. Διά τοι τοῦτο καὶ παχυτέρα κέχρηται τῇ λέξει. Ὥσπερ γὰρ εἴ τις φάρμακα βουλόμενος ὠνεῖσθαι, ἄπειρος ὤν, κελεύοι πρότερον ἐπιδείκνυσθαι τῷ ἰατρῷ ταῦτα, κἂν μάθῃ σαφῶς ὅτι ἰδὼν ἐκεῖνος ἐπῄνεσεν, οὐδεμίαν ἑτέραν ἀποδειξιν τῆς τούτων

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ἀρετῆς ἐπιζητεῖ, ἀλλ᾽ ἀκούσας ὅτι εἶδεν αὐτὰ ὁ ἰατρὸς καὶ ἐπῄνεσεν, ἀρκεῖται τῇ ψήφῳ τοῦ τεχνίτου, 9. οὕτω δὴ καὶ ὁ Μωυσῆς πᾶσαν περιεργίαν ἀναίσχυντον περιελεῖν βουλόμενος τῶν μετὰ ταῦτα μελλόντων ἀπολαύειν τῆς κτίσεως, ἀπήγγειλε καί εἶπεν ὅτι εἶδεν αὐτὰ ὁ θεὸς καὶ ἐπῄνεσε καὶ εὐηφιάσατο εἶναι καλὰ καὶ οὐχ ἁπλῶς καλά, ἀλλὰ καὶ καλὰ λίαν. 10. Μὴ τοίνυν περιεργάζου, μηδὲ πολυπραγμόνει λογισμοῖς τὰ γεγενημένα, τοιαύτην ἔχων τοῦ κάλλους αὐτῶν μαρτυρίαν. Εἰ γὰρ μὴ ἀρκεσθῇς τῷ ῥήματι τούτῳ, ἀλλὰ βουληθῇς εἰς ζήτησιν τῶν γεγενημένων ἐλθεῖν, εἰς εὖριπον λογισμῶν καὶ κύματα πολὺν ἐργαζόμενα χειμῶνα σαυτὸν ἐμβαλὼν μόνον, εἴσῃ μὲν πλέον οὐδέν, ναυάγιον δὲ ἐργάσῃ σεαυτῷ χαλεπόν. Οὐδὲ γὰρ δυνήσῃ τοὺς λόγους ἅπαντας ἑκάστου τῶν γεγενημένων εὑρεῖν, ἀλλὰ καὶ τῶν δοκούντων εἶναι σοι νῦν καλῶν πολλὰ διαβαλεῖς, ἐὰν ἀγνώμονι κεχρημένος ᾖς τῇ γνώμῃ. 11. Οὕτω γὰρ ἀσθενὴς τῶν ἀνθρώπων ὁ λογισμὸς ὡς εἰς ἐναντία περιαχθῆναι πολλάκις καὶ ἐκ διαμέτρου κατὰ ἀλλήλων στῆναι πολλοὺς ἐν τῇ περὶ τῆς κτίσεως ψήφῳ. Ἑλλήνων μὲν γὰρ παῖδες ὑπὲρ τὸ δέον αὐτὴν θαυμάσαντες καὶ τὸ μέτρον ὑπερεκβάντες, θεὸν εἶναι αὐτὴν ἐνόμισαν. 12. Μανιχαῖοι δὲ καὶ ἕτεροι πάλιν αἱρετικοί, οἱ δὲ ἕν αὐτῆς ἀποτεμόντες μέρος, αὐτομάτῳ τινὶ προσέρριψαν ὕλῃ καὶ ἀναξίαν ἔκριναν τῆς τοῦ θεοῦ δημιουργίας εἶναι. Οὕτως, ὥσπερ ἔφθην εἰπών, εἴ τις λογισμοῖς καὶ ἀγνώμονι χρήσαιτο γνώμῃ καὶ τῶν δοκούντων εἶναι καλῶν πολλὰ διαβαλεῖ.

13. Τί γάρ σοι ὡραιότερον ἡλίου εἶναι δοκεῖ; Ἀλλ᾽ οἵμως

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τοῦτο τὸ φαιδρὸν ἄστρον καὶ γλυκὺ καὶ ὀφθαλμοὺς ἀφεὶς τὰς ἀκτῖνας καὶ πυρετοὺς τίκτει καὶ καρπὸν πολλάκις κατεξήρανε καὶ ἐποίησεν ἄχρηστον καὶ δένδρα ἄκαρπα εἰργάσατο καὶ μέρος τῆς οἰκουμένης ἀοίκητον κατέστησεν ἡμῖν. 14. Τί οὖν, εἰπέ μοι ; διαβαλοῦμεν τὸν ἥλιον διὰ τοῦτο; Ἄπαγε · ἀλλὰ τοὺς λογισμοὺς ἡσυχάζειν ἀφέντες καὶ τὸν τούτων θόρυβον, ἐπιλῃψώμεθα τῆς πέτρας ἐκείνης, καὶ τῆς ῥήσεως τῆς λεγούσης · "Καὶ εἶδεν ὁ θεὸς πάντα ὅσα ἐποίησε, καὶ ἰδοὺ καλὰ λίαν", ἐπεὶ καὶ αὐτὰ ἃ ἀπηριθμησάμην νῦν, καλὰ λιάν καὶ χρηστά. Ἀλλ', ὅπερ ἔμπροσθεν εἶπον, ἐπι τὴν ῥῆσιν ἐκείνην ἐπανιέναι χρὴ διαπαντὸς καὶ λέγειν · " Ἰδοὺ πάντα ὅσα ἐποίησεν ὁ θεος καλά λίαν".

15. Ἀλλὰ τὸ τρυφᾶν καὶ γελᾶν καὶ ἐν ἡδονῇ εἶναι, καλόν ; Οὐκοῦν ἄκουσον Σολομῶντος, τοῦ πᾶν εἶδος τρυφῆς ἐπελθόντος, λέγοντος · "Ἀγαθὸν πορευθῆναι εἰς οἶκον πένθους ἢ πορευθῆναι εἰς οἶκον πότου." Ἀλλὰ νῦξ φαύλον ; δεῖ γὰρ ἐκ τῶν ἐναντίων μεταχειρίσασθαι τὸν λόγον. 16. Καίτοι γε αὕτη πόνων ἀνάπαυσιν, φροντίδων ἀπαλλαγή, νοσημάτων παραμυθία, φόβων καὶ κινδύνων οὐ μικρὰ ἀναψυχή · νεαρὸν ποιεῖ τὸ σῶμα, ἀκμάζουσαν τὴν διάνοιαν, ἀναπαύει τὴν σάρκα πεπονηκυῖαν. Ἀλλὰ νόσος κακόν · Πόθεν οὖ ὁ Λάζαρος ἐστεφανώθη ; Ἀλλα πενία ; Καὶ πόθεν ὁ Ἰὼβ εὐδοκίμησεν ; Ἀλλα θλίψεις ἐπάλληλοι καὶ συνεχεῖς ; 17. Καὶ πόθεν οἱ ἀπόστολοι ἀνεκηρύχθησαν ; ποία δὲ ὁδὸς ἡ εἰς τὴν ζωὴν ἄγουσα ; οὐχ ἡ στενὴ καὶ τεθλιμμένη ; Μὴ τοίνυν λέγε · Διὰ τί τοῦτο ;

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εἰς τί τοῦτο ; ἄλλα καὶ ἐπὶ τῶν οἰκονομιῶν καὶ ἐπὶ τῶν κτισμάτων τοῦ θεοῦ, ἣν παρέχει σιγὴν ὁ πηλὸς τῷ κεραμεῖ, ταύτην καὶ αὐτὸς τῷ ποιήσαντί σε θεῷ.

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Chapter Four

At the beginning of the Bible the prophet Moses abolished dangerous curiosity by means of one word.

1. Because at the time when creation came into existence and received its fitting beauty, when this completely harmonious, marvelous, awe-inspiring work was set before all, many foolish and insane beings were about to attack what had been created, observe how the lawgiver rebuts beforehand their improper judgment and mad opinion. With one word he restrains every impudent tongue by saying: "God saw all which he made and behold, it was very good."[1]
2. That is to say, among those things which God viewed were not only light, but also darkness. Not only fruit, but also thorns. Not only cultivated trees, but also wild trees. Not only sloping plains, but also mountains, glens, and ravines. Not only human beings, but also poisonous reptiles. Not only fish, but also sea monsters. Not only calm seas, but also the unnavigable ocean.
3. Not only the sun, moon, and stars, but also thunderbolts and hurricanes. Not only favorable winds, but also sudden squalls. Not only doves and singing birds, but also kites, hawks, vultures, and other creatures that devour human

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[1] Genesis 1: 31a

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beings. Not only sheep and oxen, but also wolves, panthers, and lions. Not only deer, hares, and antelope, but also scorpions, adders, and snakes. Among herbs, not only those plants which produce healing, but also those which are hurtful. Many were soon to be troubled by these realities and heresies born. 4. After creation had come into existence and each part received its own fitting beauty, Moses shows the creator praising the creation in each of its parts and as a whole. He does this so that after one has perceived the judgment of God, even if one were exceedingly bold and shameless, he would not curiously probe the rest of the visible creation.

5. In light of this, after saying "it became light," he adds, "and God saw the light, that it was good,"[2] good for each thing in the same way. Then, to avoid unduly lengthening his account by listing each part of creation by name, he declares his judgment concerning all created things in one word, saying: "God saw everything which he made, and behold, it was very good."[3] 6. It is not as though God recognized creation to be good after it had come into existence. Certainly not! For if a human artist, having conceived the project of his craft, already recognizes the beauty of that which is soon to be created, how much more

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[2] Genesis 1: 4

[3] Genesis 1: 31a

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that unspeakable wisdom which by the exercise of its will alone creates all things and knows them to be good before their creation.

7. He would not have created them if he had not known this. Then why is it stated in this way? For the reason I just mentioned. Therefore, having heard the prophet say to you that God saw these things and praised them, stop trying to find another test and demonstration of their goodness. Don't ask: "In what way are they good?" For the declaration of the opinion and judgment of the one who created them is more certain than the demonstration drawn from the works themselves. 8. Surely because of this he employed a rather rudimentary way of speaking. Indeed, if someone wants to purchase medicine but doesn't know anything about drugs, he first asks that they be shown to a physician. When he clearly knows that the physician has examined them and declared them to be safe, he doesn't seek any other demonstration of their goodness; the judgment of the physician suffices. 9. In the same manner Moses, desiring to suppress all shameless curiosity on the part of those who, after these things, should be enjoying creation, plainly declared and said that God saw these things, praised them, and reckoned them to be good. Not simply good, but very good.

10. Therefore, stop posing inappropriate questions, and don't abuse your human intelligence by striving to go beyond

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its limits in your thinking about created things, since you have such a witness of their goodness. For if you're not satisfied with this word, but want to occupy yourself with a detailed investigation of creation, you're only flinging yourself into a violent tide of evil reasonings and billows creating a great tempest. On the one hand, nothing new will enter your mind, and on the other hand, you will bring about a disastrous shipwreck for yourself. You won't be able to discover all the whys and wherefores for each part of creation. Rather, through exercising an ignorant opinion you will end up slandering many of the things which at present appear good to you. 11. That is to say, the power of human reason is so weak that often it is led in contrary directions. Many people are diametrically opposed in their opinion concerning creation. Greeks, having gone overboard in their admiration for creation, considered it to be god. 12. Among the Manichaeans and other heretics, however, some did not deem creation to be the work of a good god. Others, having cut off one part of it, attributed it to some self-engendering matter and judged it unworthy of God's creative activity. Therefore, as I was anxious to say, if someone should employ defective reasonings and ignorant opinion, one will end up slandering many things which are apparently good. 13. According to your own opinion, what appears to be more beautiful than the sun? Nevertheless, this radiant and delightful star also maims weak eyes and

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scorches the earth by sending out burning rays, ignites fevers, frequently dries up the crop and renders it useless, causes trees to be fruitless, and transforms part of the world into uninhabitable terrain. 14. What shall we say, then? Will we slander the sun because of this? Certainly not! Instead, having allowed these evil thoughts and their uproar to remain silent, let us seize that rock, that word which says: "And God saw all that he had made, and behold, it was very good." Therefore, those characteristics we have recently recounted are very good and profitable. As I have just said, it is imperative to always return to this saying: "Behold, all which God made is very good." 15. But is it good to live in luxury, to laugh, and to live a life devoted to pleasure-seeking? Listen to Solomon speaking, one who experienced every kind of luxury: "It is better to enter a house of sorrow than to go into a house of feasting."[4] As for the night, is it evil? For we must make use of the argument of those who oppose us.[5] 16. And yet the night is also a repose from distresses, a deliverance from anxieties, an assuagement of illnesses, and no small respite from fears and dangers. It rejuvenates the body, revitalizing the mind, and rests exhausted mortal flesh. And sickness....is it evil? For what reason, then, was Lazarus crowned? What

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[4] Ecclesiastes 7: 2a

[5] The Manichaeans.

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about poverty? What was the source of Job's fame? What about continuous and abiding afflictions? 17. For what reason were the apostles proclaimed? What kind of way is that which leads to life? Is it not the small and narrow one? Therefore, don't say, "Why is this? For what purpose is this?" Rather, in questions concerning the plans and works of God, you yourself render the same kind of silence that characterizes clay before the potter.

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Κεφ. ε΄. Ὅτι δεῖ πεπεῖσθαι ὅτι προνοεῖ πάντων ὁ Θεος καὶ τοῖς ἀμφιβάλλουσι μεγίστη ἡ διά τῆς κτίσεως ἀπόδειξις

1. Τί οὖν ; φησίν · οὐ βούλει με εἰδέναι σαφῶς καὶ πιστεύειν ὅτι προνοεῖ πάντων ὁ θεός ; Καὶ μάλα καὶ βουλομαι καί εὔχομαι καί ἐπιθυμῶ σφόδρα · οὐ μὴν περιεργάζεσθι τήν πρόνοιαν, οὐδὲ πολυπραγμονεῖν. Εἰ μὲν γὰρ οἶσθα καὶ πέπεικας σεαυτόν, μὴ ζήτει · εἰ δὲ ἀμφιβάλλεις ἐρώτησον τὴν γῆν, τὸν οὐρανόν, τὸν ἥλιον, τὴν σελήνην, ἐρώτησον τὰ ποικίλα τῶν ἀλόγων γένη, τὰ σπέρματα, τὰ φυτά, τοὺς ἀφώνους ἰχθύας, τὰς πέτρας, τὰ ὄρη, τὰς νάπας, τοὺς βουνούς, τήν νύκτα, τήν ἡμέραν.

2. Τοῦ γὰρ ἡλίου καὶ τῆς ἀκτῖνος αὐτῆς φανερωτέρα ἡ τοῦ Θεοῦ πρόνοια καὶ καθ᾽ ἕκαστον καιρὸν καὶ καθ᾽ ἕκαστον τόπον καὶ ἐν ἐρημίᾳ καὶ ἐν οἰκουμένῃ καὶ ἐν ἀοικήτῳ καὶ ἐν γῇ καὶ ἐν θαλάσσῃ καὶ ὅπουπερ ἂν ἀφίκῃ, ὑπομνήματα ὄψει τῆς προνοίας ταύτης σαφῆ καὶ διαρκῆ καὶ παλαιὰ καὶ νέα καὶ φωνὰς τῆς φωνῆς ἡμῶν ταύτης τῆς λογικῆς τρανοτέρας πανταχόθεν φερομένας καὶ τὸν βουλόμενον ἀκούειν παιδευούσας αὐτοῦ τὴν κηδεμονίαν. 4. Διὰ τοῦτο καὶ ὁ προφήτης τῶν φωνῶν τούτων τὸ ἐξαίρετον δηλῶν ἔλεγεν · "Οὐκ εἰσὶ λαλιαί, οὐδὲ λόγοι ὧν οὐχὶ ἀκούονται αἱ φωναὶ αὐτῶν." Ἡ μὲν γὰρ ἡμετέρα τοῖς ὁμοφώνοις ἐστὶ γνώριμος μόνον, ἑτερογλώσσοις δὲ οὐκέτι · ἡ δὲ διὰ τῆς κτίσεως φωνὴ πᾶσι τοῖς ἔθνεσι τοὶς κατὰ τὴν οἰκουμένην ἐστὶν ἀκουστή.

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Chapter Five

It is necessary to believe that God watches over all things. The most important proof of this for those who doubt is the demonstration which comes from nature.

1. "What then?", one says. "Don't you want me to clearly perceive and believe that God cares for all things?" Of course. I wish, long for, and desire this eagerly. Assuredly not that you curiously inquire into God's providence and abuse your intelligence by exceeding its limits. But if you know and have persuaded yourself, don't be seeking after further elucidation. But if you doubt, inquire of the earth, the heavens, the sun, the moon; ask the various irrational beings, the seeds, the plants, the speechless fish, the rocks, the mountains, the valleys, the hills, the night, the day. 2. For God's providence is as plain as the sun and its rays. In each situation and place, in the wilderness, in inhabited regions and uninhabited, on earth or sea or wherever you might go, you will observe the clear and sufficient, ancient and new, reminders of this providence; voices which speak more clearly than our rational voice and are conveyed from all places, teaching those who are willing to listen about his constant concern. 3. This is why the prophet in demonstrating the distinctive nature of these voices says: "There is no speech or language

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where their voice is not heard."[1] For our language is only intelligible to those who speak the same language. It is not understood by those who speak a different tongue. But creation's voice is heard by all the peoples throughout the earth.

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[1] Psalm 19: 3

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Κεγ. ζ΄. Περὶ τῆς ἀγάπης τοῦ Θεοῦ τῆς πᾶσαν ἀγάπην μεθ᾽ ὑπερβολῆς ὑπερβαινούσης

1. Τοῖς μὲν οὖν εὐγνώμοσιν ἀρκεῖ καὶ πρὸ τῆς διὰ τῶν ἔργων ἀποδείξεως ἡ ἀπόφασις αὐτὴ μόνη τοῦ Θεοῦ, οὐχὶ τὴν προνοιαν αὐτοῦ δεικνῦσα μόνον, ἀλλὰ καὶ τὸν σφοδρὸν ἔρωτα τὸν περὶ ἡμᾶς. Οὐ γὰρ ἁπλῶς ἡμῶν προνοεῖ, ἀλλὰ καὶ ἐρῶν καὶ σφόδρα ἐρῶν ἔρωτά τινα ἀμήχανον, ἔρωτα ἀπαθῆ μέν, θερμότατον δὲ καὶ εὐτονώτατον καὶ γνήσιον καὶ ἀκατάλυτον καὶ σβεσθῆναι μὴ δυνάμενον. 2. Καὶ τοῦτον παραστῆσαι βουλομένη ἡ Θεία Γραφή, παράγει μὲν εἰκόνας τάς ἐν ἀνθρόποις, παράγει δὲ καὶ πολλὰ ἔρωτος ὑποδείγματα καὶ προνοίας καὶ κηδεμονίας. Οὐ μὴν μέχρι τούτων ἡμᾶς μόνον βούλεται ἑστάναι, ἀλλὰ καὶ ὑπερβαίνειν τὰ παραδείγματα τῷ λογισμῷ. Οὐδὲ ὡς ἀρκοῦντα δεῖξαι τὸ φίλτρον παράγει ταῦτα, ἀλλ᾽ ὡς γνώριμα τοῖς ἀκούουσι καὶ τῶν ἄλλων μᾶλλον δυνάμενα δεῖξαι τοῦτο.
3. Οἷον τι λέγω. Πρός τινας ὀδυρομένους καὶ πενθοῦντάς ποτε καὶ λέγοντας · "Ἐγκατέλιπε με Κύριος καὶ ἐπελάθετό μου ὁ θεὸς τοῦ Ἰσραήλ", τηνικαῦτα ἐπάγει λέγων ὁ προφήτης · "Μὴ ἐπιλήσεται γυνὴ τοῦ παιδίου αὐτῆς ἢ τοῦ ἐλεῆσαι τὰ ἔκγονα τῆς κοιλίας αὐτῆς ;" τοῦτο λέγων ὅτι ὥσπερ ἐκείνη οὐκ ἂν ἐπιλάθοιτο τῶν παιδίων τῶν ἑαυτῆς, οὕτως οὐδὲ ὁ Θεὸς τοῦ γένους τῶν ἀνθρώπων.
4. Εἶτα ἵνα μάθῃς ὅτι τὴν εἰκόνα ταύτην παρήγαγεν ὁ προφήτης, οὐχὶ τοσοῦτον βουλόμενος δεῖξαι τὸ μέτρον τῆς

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ἀγάπης τοῦ θεοῦ ὅση μητρός ἐστι περὶ τὰ ἔκγονα τῆς κοιλιάς αὐτῆς, ἀλλ᾽ ἐπειδὴ τοῦτο μᾶλλον τῶν ἄλλων ἐξαίρετον μέτρον ἀγάπης γνώριμον εἶχε -- τὸ μέντοι φίλτρον τοῦ θεοῦ πολλῷ μεῖζον ἐκείνου -- ἐπήγαγεν · "Εἰ δὲ καὶ ἐπιλάθοιτο ταῦτα γυνή, ἀλλ᾽ ἐγὼ οὐκ ἐπιλήσομαί σου, λέγει Κύριος." 5. Εἶδες πῶς ὑπερέβη τῆς μητρὸς τὸ μέτρον ; Καὶ ἵνα μάθῃς ὅτι ἐκ πολλοῦ τοῦ περιόντος ὑπερέβη καὶ μητρὸς φιλοστοργίαν καὶ πατρὸς περὶ παῖδας πόθον, ὁ μὲν προφήτης φησί ·
"Καθὼς οἰκτειρέι πατὴρ υἱούς, ᾠκτείρησε Κύριος τοὺς φοβουμένους αὐτόν." Καὶ αὐτὸς δὲ πάλιν ταύτην εἰσάγει τὴν εἰκόνα τῆς ἀγάπης · ᾔδει γὰρ ταύτην τῶν ἄλλων ἔχουσάν τι ἐξαίρετον.

6. Ὁ δὲ καὶ προφητῶν καὶ πάντων Δεσπότης δηλῶν ὅτι καὶ ταύτης τὸ μέτρον ἐκ πολλοῦ τοῦ περιόντος ὑπερβαίνει τοῦ θεοῦ ἡ κηδεμονία καὶ ὅσον τοῦ φωτὸς τὸ μέσον ἐστὶ πρὸς σκότος καὶ πονηρίας πρὸς ἀγαθότητα, τοσοῦτον τὸ μέτρον τῆς τοῦ θεοῦ χρηστότητος καὶ προνοίας πρὸς τὴν πατρικὴν φιλοστοργίαν, ἄκουε τί φησι ·

7. "Τίς ἐστιν ἐξ ὑμῶν, ὃν ἐὰν αἰτήσῃ ὁ υἱὸς αὐτοῦ ἄρτον, μὴ λίθον ἐπιδώσει αὐτῷ ; Εἰ δὲ ὑμεῖς πονηροὶ ὄντες οἴδατε δόματα ἀγαθὰ διδόναι τοῖς τέκνοις ὑμῶν, πολλῷ μᾶλλον ὁ Πατὴρ ὑμῶν ὁ ἐν τοῖς οὐρανοῖς δώσει ἀγαθὰ τοῖς αἰτοῦσιν αὐτόν", δεικνὺς ὅτι ὅσον πονηρίας καὶ ἀγαθότητος τὸ μέσον, τοσοῦτον ἡ τοῦ θεοῦ ἀγαθότης τῆς τῶν πατέρων κηδεμονίας ἐστὶν ἀνωτέρα.

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8. Ταῦτα δὲ εἶπον τὰ ὑποδείγματα ἵν', ὅταν ἑτέρας ἐπαγάγω φίλτρου εἰκόνας, μὴ μέχρι τοῦ μέτρου τοῦ λεγομένου παρὰ τῶν προφητῶν στήσῃς τὴν διάνοιαν, ἀλλ' ἔχων τὸν κανόνα τοῦτον ὑπερβῇς τῷ λογισμῷ περαιτέρω καὶ ἴδῃς τῆς ἀγάπης αὐτοῦ τὴν ἄφατον ὑπερβολήν. Οὐδὲ γὰρ ἀρκεῖται τοῖς τῆς φύσεως μέτροις, ἀλλ' ἀφεὶς αὐτὰ καὶ ὑπερακοντίσας καὶ ἕτερα πάλιν προστίθησιν ὑποδείγματα.

9. Τοιοῦτος γὰρ ὁ φιλῶν · διὰ πλειόνων βούλεται δεικνύναι τοῦτο τῷ φιλουμένῳ · ὃ δὴ καὶ αὐτὸς ποιεῖ εἰς τοπικῶν διαστημάτων μέγεθος ἐξάγων τόν λόγον, οὐχ ἵνα πάλιν τοσοῦτον αὐτοῦ νομίσῃς τὸ φίλτρον, ἀλλ' ἐπειδὴ τοῦτο μόνον τὸ μέτρον τῶν διαστημάτων τῶν ἄλλων ἐξαίρετον καὶ γνώριμον ἦν τοῖς ἀκούουσι. 10. Καὶ διὰ μὲν τοῦ Δαυὶδ φησι · "Κατὰ τὸ ὕψος τοῦ οὐρανοῦ ἀπὸ τῆς γῆς ἐκραταίωσε Κύριος τὸ ἔλεος αὐτοῦ ἐπὶ τοὺς φοβουμένους αὐτόν" καὶ · "Καθ' ὅσον ἀπέχουσιν ἀνατολαὶ ἀπὸ δυσμῶν, ἐμάκρυνεν ἀφ' ἡμῶν τὰς ἀνομίας ἡμῶν", διὰ τοῦ Ἡσαΐου δὲ · "Οὐ γάρ εἰσιν αἱ βουλαί μου, ὡς αἱ βουλαὶ ὑμῶν, οὐδὲ αἱ ὁδοί μου, ὡς αἱ ὁδοὶ ὑμῶν · ἀλλ' ὅσον ἀπέχει ὁ οὐρανὸς ἀπὸ τῆς γῆς, τοσοῦτον ἀπέχουσιν αἱ ὁδοί μου ἀπὸ τῶν ὁδῶν ὑμῶν καὶ τὰ διανοήματά μου ἀπὸ τῶν διανοημάτων ὑμῶν." Ταῦτα δὲ ἔλεγεν, ἀνωτέρω περὶ ἀφέσεως ἁμαρτημάτων διαλεχθεὶς καὶ εἰπών · "Ὅτι ἐπὶ πολὺ ἀφήσω τὰς ἀνομίας ὑμῶν."

11. Εἶτα δειχνὺς πόσον, ἐπήγαγε τοῦτο τὸ ὑπόδειγμα · καὶ οὐδὲ τούτοις ἀρκεῖται μόνοις, ἀλλ' εἰς ἑτέραν παχυτέραν

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καταφέρει τὸν λόγον εἰκόνα. Ἐν γὰρ τῷ Ὡσηὲ ἔλεγε · "Τί σοι ποιήσω, Ἐφραΐμ ; τί σοι ποιήσω, Ἰούδα ; Ὡς Ἀδάμα θήσομαι σε καὶ ὡς Σεβοείμ. Μετεστράφη ἡ καρδία μου ἐν τῷ αὐτῷ · συνεταράχθη ἡ μεταμέλειά μου." 12. Ὃ δὲ λέγει, τοιοῦτόν ἐστιν · Οὐδὲ τὸ ῥῆμα ἤγεγκα τῆς ἀπειλῆς, φησι. Καὶ ἀνθρωπίνως μὲν διαλέγεται, οὐχ ἵνα τι ἀνθρώπινον ὑποπτεύσῃς, ἄπαγε, ἀλλ᾽ ἵνα ἀπὸ καὶ ἀκαταλυτον νοήσῃς. 13. Ὥσπερ γάρ τις μανικῶς τινος ἐρῶν, οὐδὲ μέχρι ῥημάτων αἴρεῖται λυπῆσαι τὸν ἐρώμενον, οὕτω δὴ καὶ αὐτος φησιν · Ἐπειδὴ μόνον εἶπον, καὶ ἐλύπησα τῇ λέξει · "Μετεστράφη ἡ καρδία μου ἐν ταὐτῷ." Οὐδὲ γὰρ τὰς Βαρυτάτας ταύτας παραιτεῖται εἰκόνας παράγειν, ἵνα δείξῃ το φίλτρον, ὅπερ μάλιστα ἐρῶντός ἐστι.

14. Καὶ οὐδὲ ἐνταῦθα ἔστη, ἀλλὰ καὶ περαιτέρω προέισι πάλιν, ἕτερον βαθύτερον ἐπάγων ὑπόδειγμα καὶ λέγων · "Ὃν τρόπον εὐφρανθήσεται νυμφίος ἐπὶ νύμφῃ, οὕτως εὐφρανθήσεται Κύριος ἐπὶ σοί", ὅτι μάλιστα ἐν ἀρχῇ θερμότεροι οἱ ἐρῶντές εἰσιν. Οὕτω δὲ εἴρηται, οὐχ ἵνα τι ἀνθρώπινον ὑποπτεύσῃς -- πάλιν γὰρ τὰ αὐτὰ λέγων οὐ παύσομαι -- ἀλλ᾽ ἵνα ἐκ τούτων το θερμόν, τὸ γνήσιον, τὸ σφοδρόν, τὸ πεπυρωμένον τῆς ἀγάπης ἴδῃς. 15. Εἶτα εἰπών ὅτι ὡς πατὴρ φιλει καὶ πλέον ἢ πατήρ, ὡς μήτηρ καὶ πλέον ἢ μήτηρ, ὡς νυμφίος καὶ πλέον ἢ νυμφιός, ὅτι τοσοῦτον ὅσον τὸ διάστημα τοῦ οὐρανοῦ ἀπὸ τῆς γῆς καὶ πλέον ἢ τοσοῦτον, ὅτι τηλικοῦτον ὅσον ἀπέχουσιν ἀνατολαι ἀπὸ δυσμῶν καὶ πλέον ἢ τηλικοῦτον, οὐδὲ ἐνταῦθα ἵσταται τῶν

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εἰκόνων, ἀλλὰ καὶ περαιτέρω πρόεισιν εἰς ἐπιδειξιν πολλῷ ταπεινοτέρου ὑποδείγματος. 16. Τοῦ γάρ Ἰωνᾶ μετὰ τὴν φυγὴν καὶ τοῦ θεοῦ τήν καταλλαγὴν τὴν πρὸς Νινευίτας ἐξαπορηθέντος, ὡς οὐκ ἐλθόντων εἰς ἔργον καὶ σκυθρωπάσαντος, ἐπιτάξας τῇ ἀκτῖνι θερμοτέραν ἀφεῖναι τὴν φλόγα, εἶτα κελεύσας τῇ γῇ σχεδίσαι αὐτῷ στέγην ἀπὸ λαχάνου καὶ θαλψας αὐτὸν μεθ' ὑπερβολῆς καὶ ἀναπαύσας, εἶτα λυπήσας τῷ ταύτην ἀφανίσαι τὴν στέγην, ἐπειδὴ τῷ μὲν εἶδεν ἀνεθέντα, τῷ δὲ κατατεινόμενον, ἄκουε τί φησι πρὸς αὐτον · 17. "Σὺ μὲν ἐφείσω ὑπὲρ τῆς κολοκύντης, ὑπὲρ ἧς οὐκ ἐκακοπαθησας, οὐδὲ ἐξέθρεψας · ἐγὼ δὲ οὐ φείσομαι ὑπερ Νινευὴ τῆς πολεως τῆς μεγάλης, ἐν ᾗ κατοικοῦσιν ἐν αὐτῇ πλείους ἢ δώδεκα μυριάδες ἀνδρῶν, οἵτινες οὐκ ἔγνωσαν δεξιὰν ἢ ἀριστεράν." 18. Ὁ δὲ λέγει τοιοῦτόν ἐστιν · Οὐχ οὕτως ἀνέπαυσέ σε ἡ σκιὰ τοῦ λαχάνου ὡς ἐμὲ εὔφρανεν ἡ σωτηρία τῶν Νινευιτῶν · οὐδὲ οὕτως σε ἐλύπησεν ἡ ἀφαίρεσις αὐτοῦ ὡς εἰμὲ ὁ τούτων ὀλεθρος. Οὕτω παρὰ γνώμην μου ἡ ἀπώλεια αὐτῶν ἦν. Ὁρᾷς πῶς καὶ ἐνταῦθα ὑπερβαίνει τὴν εἰκόνα. Οὐ γὰρ εἶπε · "Συ μὲν ἐφείσω ὑπερ τῆς κολοκύντης", καὶ ἐσίγησεν, ἀλλ' ἐπήγαγεν · "Ἐφ' ᾗ οὐκ ἐκακοπάθησας, οὐδὲ ἐξέθρεψας αὐτήν.

19. Ἐπειδὴ γὰρ ἐκεῖνα μάλιστα φιλοῦσι τῶν φυτῶν οἱ γηπόνοι περὶ ἃ πολὺν ἐπεδείξαντο πόνων, δεῖξαι θέλων ὅτι καὶ κατὰ τοῦτο φιλεῖ τὸ εἶδος τοῦ φίλτρου τοὺς ἀνθρώπους, τοῦτο προσέθηκεν · "Εἰ γὰρ σὺ τοῦ ἀλλοτρίου ἔργου οὕτως αντείχου, φησί, πολλῷ μᾶλλον ἐγὼ τοῦ οἰκείου καὶ οὗ ποιητής εἰμι".

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Εἶτα καὶ ὑποτέμνεται τι τῆς κατηγορίας αὐτῶν λέγων ὅτι · "Οὐκ ἔγνωσαν δεξιὰν ἢ ἀριστεράν", ἀφελείᾳ μᾶλλον ἢ κακίᾳ πεπλημμεληκέναι αὐτοὺς ἀποφηνάμενος, ὅ καὶ ἐδειξε τὸ τῆς μετανοίας τέλος.

20. Καὶ ἑτέροις δὲ ἐπιτιμῶν θρηνοῦσιν ὡς ἐγκαταλειφθεῖσι, ταῦτα λέγει τὰ ῥήματα · "Ἐρωτήσατέ με περὶ τῶν υἱῶν μου καὶ περὶ τῶν ἔργων τῶν χειρῶν μου ἐντείλασθέ μοι." Ὃ δὲ λέγει τοιοῦτόν ἐστι · Τίς πατέρα ἀναμιμνῄσκει καὶ παρακαλεῖ ὥστε προνοῆσαι παιδός ; ἢ τεχνίτην καὶ δημιουργὸν ὥστε μὴ ἀφεῖναι διαπεσεῖν τὸ ἔργον ; Εἶτα ἐπ᾽ ἀνθρώπων μὲν ἀρκεῖσθε τῇ φύσει καὶ τῇ τέχνῃ εἰς ἀπόδειξιν τῆς κηδεμονίας, ἐμὲ δὲ οἴεσθε χρῄζειν τοῦ παρακαλοῦντός με, ἵνα τῶν τέκνων τῶν ἐμῶν καὶ τῶν ἔργων ἀντιλήψωμαι ; 21. Ταῦτα δὲ ἔλεγεν, οὐχ ἵνα μὴ παρακαλῶσιν, ἀλλ᾽ ἵνα εἰδέναι ἔχωσιν ὅτι καὶ πρὸ τῆς παρακλήσεως ὁ θεὸς τὰ ἑαυτοῦ ποιεῖ, βούλεται δὲ καὶ παρακαλεῖσθαι, ἐπειδὴ μέγα οἶδε τοῖς παρακαλοῦσιν ἐντεῦθεν τὸ κέρδος. Εἶδες πῶς σαφέστερον καὶ ἡλίου φαιδρότερον διὰ τῶν ὑποδειγμάτων τούτων τῆς ἀφάτου προνοίας αὐτοῦ ἡ ὑπόδειξις διαλάμπει ;

22. Σκόπει δέ. Παρήγαγεν εἰς μέσον τὸν πατέρα, τὴν μητέρα, τὸν νυμφίον, τὸ διάστημα τοῦ οὐρανοῦ καὶ τῆς γῆς, τὸ μέσον τῶν ἀνατολῶν πρὸς δυσμάς, τὸν φυτουργὸν καὶ περὶ λάχανα πονούμενον, τὸν οἰκοδόμον τῶν γενησομένων, τὸν σφοδρὸν ἐραστὴν τὸν ταραττόμενον, εἰ καὶ μέχρι ῥημάτων λυπήσειε τὸν ἐρώμενον · καὶ τοσοῦτον ἁπάντων ὑπερακοντίζειν διὰ πάντων

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τούτων ἔδειξε τὴν τοῦ θεοῦ ἀγαθότητα, ὅσον πονηρίαν χρηστότητος.

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Chapter Six

On the love of God which infinitely transcends all other kinds of love.

1. For those who are well-disposed, the revelation of God in and of itself, even before the proof drawn from his works, suffices to demonstrate not only his providence, but also his fervent love toward us. For he does not simply watch over us, but also loves us; he ardently loves us with an inexplicable love, with a impassible yet fervent, vigorous, genuine, indissoluble love, a love that is impossible to extinguish. 2. Desiring to set this truth before our minds, the divine Scripture brings in comparisons found among human beings and introduces many examples of his love, providence, and care. It certainly does not want us to come to a stop here, but rather to go beyond these examples through the exercise of our reason. The Scripture does not import these examples as adequate to demonstrate the divine love, but as well-known facts to those who pay heed, examples that are better able than any others to express it. 3. What I am saying is something like the following example. To some who one day are lamenting, mourning, and saying, "The Lord has forsaken me, the God of Israel has forgotten me," the prophet responds by saying: "Will a woman forget her child or not have pity on the

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offspring of her womb?"[1] The prophet says this to make the point that just as a woman would not forget her own children, so neither would God forget humankind. 4. Then, so that you may understand that the prophet introduced this comparison, not with the intention of showing that the love of God and the love of a woman for her children are equal, for he held it to be a well-known fact that the love of God far surpasses other types of love -- certainly, the love of God is greater than human love -- he went on to say: "Now even if a woman would forget these, I will not forget you, declares the Lord."[2] 5. Do you see how the degree of God's love exceeds that of a mother? In order that you might see how God's love super abundantly transcends the warm affection of a mother and the love of a father for their children, the prophet says: "Just as a father has compassion on his sons, so the Lord has shown compassion toward those who fear him."[3] He again introduces this comparison of love, all the while knowing that the love of God has a certain quality that surpasses all other types of love. 6. The Master of prophets and of all things demonstrates that the care of God exceedingly transcends the love of a father for his children. As great as is the difference

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[1] Isaiah 49: 14-15

[2] Isaiah 49: 15

[3] Psalm 103: 13

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between light and darkness, between evil and goodness, so great is the difference between the goodness and providence of God in comparison to the tender love of a father. Listen to what he says: 7. "Who among you, if his son should ask for a loaf of bread, will give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a snake? If you, then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask him,"[4] signifying that as great as the distance is between good and evil, so much more does the goodness of God surpass the tender care of human fathers. 8. I have given these examples so that when I introduce other illustrations you wouldn't limit your thinking to the measure of what is spoken by the prophets, but having this rule you should use your reason to go even further and see the unspeakable excess of the love of God. For he is not satisfied with the measures provided by nature. Having laid them aside and transcending them, he again proposes other examples. 9. For the one who loves is just like this. He desires to demonstrate his love to his beloved through many kinds of testimony. God himself makes use of analogies which describe the distance between one place and another, not so you will again imagine his love to be limited to such a distance, but because comparisons of distance are more

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[4] Matthew 7: 9-11

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suggestive than others and are well-known to those who are listening. 10. Therefore, he says through David: "For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is his mercy for those who fear him; as far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions from us."[5] Now through Isaiah: "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are my ways as your ways. As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts."[6] He says these things after having discussed earlier the remission of sins where he said: "I will completely forgive your transgressions."[7] 11. Then he showed the extent of his love by introducing this example. He is not satisfied with these illustrations alone, but simplifies the discussion with the use of a more rudimentary image. For in Hosea he was saying: "What will I do with you, Ephraim? What will I do with you, Judah? Will I treat you like Admah and like Zeboiim? My heart is changed within me; I am troubled in my regret over you."[8] 12. What he is endeavoring to express is something like this: "I could not bear a threatening word," he says. He

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[5] Psalm 103: 11-12

[6] Isaiah 55: 8-9

[7] Isaiah 55: 7

[8] Hosea 11: 8

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expresses himself in a human fashion, not so that you would suppose his words to be merely human. Far from that! Rather, his simple way of speaking is meant to facilitate your discernment of the love worthy of God, genuine and everlasting. 13. For when someone is madly in love, one chooses his words very carefully, not wanting to grieve the one loved. This is why God speaks this way: "I was barely able to speak and grieved over my words, 'My heart is changed within me'."[9] He does not avoid using these opaque images to express his love, which is most certainly what his love is like. 14. And he is not limited to this image, but once more advances even further, introducing another deeper example: "As a bridegroom rejoices over his bride, so the Lord will rejoice over you."[10] That is to say, it is especially at the beginning that lovers are fervent in their love. He speaks this way, not so you would think his love to be something human -- I will not stop saying the same things over again -- but that through these images you might discern the warmth, genuineness, excess, and fire of his love. 15. And so when he says that he loves as a father and more than a father, as a mother and more than a mother, as a bridegroom and more than a bridegroom, that his love is

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[9] Hosea 11: 8

[10] Isaiah 62: 5b

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as great as the distance between heaven and earth and even greater than this, as great as the distance between east and west and even greater than this, he doesn't limit himself to these images but goes so far as to employ an even more humble example. 16. Indeed, Jonah was quite perplexed after his flight and the reconciliation of the Ninevites with God because the things he had threatened against them had not come to pass. He suffered from a very human kind of distress and was sad in his countenance. The Lord ordered the rays of the sun to emit a hotter flame. He then commanded the earth to construct a dwelling for Jonah from a plant. Having scorched him with the sun's heat, he then provided him with rest. Next God caused him to suffer by obliterating his shelter. When he saw him relieved on the one hand and afflicted on the other, listen to what he says to him: 17. "You were concerned about this plant, though you did not trouble yourself over it or make it grow. And shall I not be concerned over Nineveh, the great city, in which live more than one hundred and twenty thousand people who do not know the right hand from the left!"[11] 18. What he wants to say is this: The shadow of the plant didn't relieve you as much as the salvation of the Ninevites cheered me. And the destruction of the plant didn't grieve you as much as the ruin of the Ninevites would have

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[11] Jonah 4: 10-11

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anguished me. Therefore, their destruction was contrary to my will. You see how again he here goes beyond the illustration. For he did not say, "You were concerned about the gourd," and limit himself to that; but rather he added: "you did not trouble yourself over it or make it grow."

19. Asgardeners are especially fond of those plants on which they have expended a great deal of time and effort, so also God, desiring to show that he loves people with the same type of love, added: "For if you so fervently defend the work of another, he says, how much more should I protect those things which belong to me and of which I am the creator." He then cuts short the accusation against them by saying that "they didn't know the right hand from the left,"[12] demonstrating that they erred more from ignorance than by evil intent, which also manifests the outcome of their repentance.

20. And in rebuking others who were lamenting as though they had been abandoned he says these words: "Ask me about my sons and command me concerning the works of my hands."[13] Now what he is saying is this: "Who reminds or encourages a father to take thought for his child, or an artisan or artist to not allow their work to turn out poorly?

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[12] Jonah 4:11

[13] Isaiah 45: 11

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Therefore, from a human perspective nature and art suffice for you as a demonstration of loving care, but you think that I have need for someone to encourage me to support my children and works?" 21. Now he said these things, not to stop them from asking for help, but so that they would know that he is acting on their behalf even before they ask. He wants to be asked, though, because he knows that those who ask receive a great benefit from doing so. You see through these examples how the teaching concerning his inexpressible providence shines through more clearly and radiantly than the sun. 22. Now consider this. He has introduced as examples a father, a mother, a bridegroom, the distance between heaven and earth, the distance between the rising and the setting of the sun, a gardener laboring strenuously over his plants, an architect and the buildings he will some day erect, and the ardent lover, troubled over the possibility he might have grieved his beloved, if only with his words. He demonstrates through all these illustrations that the goodness of God differs from all these as much as evil differs from goodness.

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Κεφ. ζ΄. Ἀπόδειξις τῆς τοῦ θεοῦ προνοίας ἡ διὰ τῆς κτισέως

1. Καὶ τοῖς μὲν οὖν εὐγνώμοσιν, ὅπερ ἔφην, ἀρκεῖ καὶ ταῦτα · ἀλλ' ἐπειδή τινές εἰσι πήλινοι καὶ δυσανάγωγοι καὶ δυσπειθεῖς καὶ αὐτόσαρκες, φέρε δὴ καὶ διὰ τῶν ἔργων αὐτῶν ἀποδείξωμεν αὐτοῦ τὴν πρόνοιαν, καθ' ὅσον ἡμῖν οἷόν τε. Ἅπασαν γὰρ αὐτήν, μᾶλλον δὲ οὐδὲ τὸ πολλοστὸν αὐτῆς μέρος παραστῆσαι ῥᾴδιον · οὕτως ἐστὶν ἄπειρος καὶ ἄφατος καὶ διὰ τῶν μικρῶν καὶ διὰ τῶν μεγάλων διαλάμπουσα καὶ τῶν ὁρωμένων καὶ τῶν οὐχ ὁρωμένων. Πλὴν ἀλλ' ἀπὸ τῶν ὁρωμένων τεώς ποιησώμεθα τὴν ἀπόδειξιν.

2. Τὴν γὰρ θαυμασίαν ταύτην καὶ παναρμόνιον κτίσιν δι' οὐδένα ἕτερον ἐποίησεν ἢ διὰ σέ · καὶ καλὴν οὕτω καὶ μεγάλην οὕτω καὶ ποικίλην καὶ πολυτελῆ καὶ διαρκῆ καὶ χρησίμην καὶ πανταχόθεν κερδαλέαν καὶ πρὸς σώματος διατροφὴν καὶ σύστασιν καὶ πρὸς ψυχῆς φιλοσοφίαν καὶ πρὸς θεογνωσίας ὁδὸν ἐπιτηδείαν κατεσκεύασε διὰ σέ. 3. Οὐδὲ γὰρ ἄγγελοι ταύτης ἐδέοντο · πῶς γάρ οἱ καὶ πρὶν ἢ γενέσθαι αὐτὴν ὄντες ; Ὅτι γάρ ἐκεῖνοι πολλῷ ταύτης πρεσβύτεροι, ἄκουε τί φησιν ὁ θεὸς τῷ Ἰὼβ διαλεγόμενος · " Ὅτε ἐγένετο ἄστρα, ᾔνεσάν με πάντες ἄγγελοί μου καὶ ὑμνησαν φωνῇ μεγάλῃ" · Τοῦτ' ἔστιν, ἐκπλαγέντες τὸ πλῆθος, τὸ κάλλος, τὴν θέσιν, τὴν χρείαν, τὴν ποικιλίαν, τὴν φαιδρότητα, τὴν λαμπηδόνα, τὴν ἁρμονίαν, τὰ ἄλλα πάντα ἅπερ ἀκριβέστερον ἡμῶν συνορῶσιν ἐκεῖνοι.

4. Οὐκ ἀστράσι δὲ ἐκαλλώπισε μόνον, ἀλλὰ καὶ ἡλίῳ καὶ

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σελήνῃ κατεκόσμησεν, ἐν ἑκατέρῳ τῷ καιρῷ πολλὴν μέν σοι τὴν ἡδονήν, πολλὴν δὲ παρέχων τὴν χρείαν. Τί γὰρ ὡραιότερον οὐρανου, νῦν μὲν ὑπο τῆς ἀκτῖνος λαμπομένου, νῦν δέ, καθάπερ τισὶν ὀφθαλμῶν βολαῖς, τῷ ἀπείρῳ τῶν ἄστρων πλήθει καταυγάζοντος τήν γῆν καὶ ναύταις καὶ ὁδοιπόροις ὁδηγούς τινας διδόντος καὶ χειραγωγούς ;

5. Ὁ γὰρ τὸ πέλαγος τέμνων καὶ ἐπὶ τῶν οἰάκων καθήμενος καὶ κυμάτων ἐμβολαῖς καὶ ὑδάτων ἀτάκτων ῥύμῃ καὶ πνευμάτων βιαίων φορᾷ καὶ νυκτὸς ἀσελήνῳ σκότῳ ἐκδίδωσιν ἑαυτόν, τῇ παρὰ τούτου ὁδηγίᾳ θαρρῶν · 6. καὶ ὁ ἐν ὕψει κείμενος ἀστήρ τὸν ἐκ τοσούτου καθήμενον διαστήματος, ὥσπερ ἐγγὺς καὶ πλησίον παρών, οὕτω μετὰ ἀκριβείας χειραγωγεῖ καὶ πρὸς λιμένας ὁρμίζει, φωνὴν μὲν οὐκ ἀφιείς, τῇ δὲ ὄψει δεικνὺς αὐτοῖς τὰς ὁδοὺς καὶ τὴν θάλασσαν τέμνειν αὐτοῖς χαριζόμενος μετ' ἀσφαλείας, καιροὺς ὑποδεικνύς, ὥστε νῦν μέν εἴσω τοῦ λιμένος κατέχειν τὸ πλοῖον, νῦν δὲ θαρροῦντας εἰς τὸ πέλαγος ἐξάγειν καὶ μὴ διὰ τὴν τοῦ μέλλοντος ἀδηλίαν ἀπροόπτως εἰς χειμέριον ἐμπίπτοντας ἡμέραν ναυάγιον ὑπομένειν.

7. Καὶ οὐχ ὁλοκλήρων δὲ ἐνιαυτῶν μέτρα μόνον καὶ καιρους χαρακτηρίζουσιν οὗτοι, ἀλλὰ καὶ ἑκάστης νυκτὸς καὶ ὥραν καὶ ῥοπήν μετὰ πολλῆς παριστῶσι τῆς ἀκριβείας καὶ ποιοῦσιν εἰδέναι τοὺς ὁρῶντας, πότε μὲν τὸ πλέον αὐτῆς παρῆλθε, ποτε δὲ τὸ ἔλαττον ὑπολέλειπται καὶ αὖ τοὐναντίον παλιν, οπερ οὐ ναύταις μόνον, ἀλλὰ καὶ ὁδοιπόροις χρήσιμον, ὥστε μή ἀωρι τῆς νυκτός τῆς ὁδοιπορίας ἅπτεσθι, μήτε ἐν καιρῷ τῷ προσήκοντι οἴκοι καθῆσθαι. Τοῦτο μετὰ τῶν ἀστέρων καὶ οἱ

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σεληναῖοι δρόμοι μετὰ ἀκριβείας εἰσὶν ἐμπεπιστευμένοι.

8. Καθάπερ γὰρ ὁ ἥλιος τὰς ὥρας τῆς ἡμέρας, οὕτω καὶ ἡ σελήνη τὰς τῆς νυκτὸς κανονίζει καὶ πολλὴν ἑτέραν χρείαν παρέχει καὶ ἀέρος εὔκρατον χύσιν καὶ δρόσου γένεσιν προὸς τὴν τῶν σπερμάτων βλάστην καὶ πολλὴν οἴκοθεν εἰς τὴν σύστασιν τῶν ἀνθρώπων παρεχομένη τὴν ὠφέλειαν καὶ μέση τοῦ χοροῦ τῶν ἀστέρων καὶ τῆς ἡλιακῆς ἱσταμένη λαμπηδόνος · τῆς μὲν γάρ ἐστιν ἐλάττων, τῶν δὲ ἀμείνων καὶ πολλῷ μειζων.

9. Οὐ μικρὰ δὲ καὶ ἐκ τῆς ποικιλίας ταύτης ἡδονὴ τοῖς θεαταῖς καὶ χρεία, ὥσπερ οὐδὲ τυχοῦσα ἡ ὄνησις ἡ ἀπὸ τῶν καιρῶν, ἡ ἀπὸ τῶν ὡρῶν, ἡ ἀπὸ τοῦ μέτρου, ἡ ἀπο τοῦ μεγεθους καὶ τῆς βραχύτητος, ἡ ἀπὸ τῆς διαφορᾶς τῆς ἀφάτου · τὸν μὲν γάρ ἐλάττω, τὸν δὲ μείζω καὶ φαιδρότερον ἔστιν ἰδεῖν καὶ κατὰ διαφόρους καιροὺς φαινομένους αὐτῶν τινας. 10. Ἡ γὰρ περιουσία τῆς εὐμηχάνου σοφίας πολλὴν πανταχοῦ τὴν ποικιλίαν ἐργάζεται, ὁμοῦ μὲν τῆς οἰκείας θαυματουργίας τὴν ἀποδειξιν ἐπιδεικνυμένη, ὁμοῦ δὲ καὶ τῆς τῶν ὁρώντων προνοουσα χρειάς καὶ πολλήν καὶ ἄφατον τὴν ὠφέλειαν παρεχομένη καὶ μετα τούτων ἁπάντων καὶ τὴν ἡδονήν.

11. Τί γὰρ τερπνότερον οὐρανοῦ, νῦν μὲν ὡς σινδόνος καθαρᾶς καὶ διαυγοῦς ὑπὲρ κεφαλῆς ἡπλωμένου, νῦν δὲ ὡς λειμῶνος πολυανθοῦς ποικιλλομένου καὶ τὸν αὐτοῦ φαίνοντος στέφανον ; Οὐδὲ γὰρ οὕτως ἡδὺ λειμῶνα ἰδεῖν ἐν ἡμέρᾳ ὡς ηδυ καὶ τερπνὸν οὐρανὸν ἰδεῖν ἐν νυκτὶ μυρίοις ἄνθεσι τοῖς τῶν ἀστέρων πανταχόθεν κατεστεμμένον, ἄνθεσιν οὐδέποτε μαραινομένοις, ἀλλ' ἀκραιφνὲς ἀει τὸ οἰκεῖον καλλος ἐπιδεικνυμένοις.

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12. Τί δὲ αὐτοῦ ἡδύτερον, ὅταν τῆς νυκτὸς ἀπελθούσης καὶ μηδέπω τῆς ἀκτῖνος ἀνισχούσης, καθάπερ κροκωτῷ τινι πέπλῳ τοῖς προοιμίοις τῆς ἀνατολῆς τοῦ ἡλίου φοινισσόμενος καλλωπίζηται ; τί δὲ ἡλίου γένοιτ' ἂν ὡραιότερον θεάμα ἀνίσχοντος ὑπὸ τὴν ἕω καὶ μικρᾷ καιροῦ ῥοπῇ πᾶσαν μὲν γῆν, πᾶσαν δὲ θάλασσαν, πᾶν δὲ ὄρος καὶ νάπας καὶ βουνούς, πάντα δὲ τὸν οὐρανὸν ταῖς τῶν ἀκτίνων καταλάμποντος βολαῖς καὶ τῆς νυκτὸς τὸ περιβόλαιον ἀπαμφιεννύντος τῶν ὁρωμένων καὶ γυμνὰ πάντα πρὸ τῶν ὀφθαλμῶν δεικνύντος ἡμῖν ;

13. Πῶς ἄν τις αὐτοῦ ἐκπλαγείη τοὺς δρόμους, τὴν εὐταξίαν, τὴν ἐν τοσαύταις ἐτῶν περιόδοις ἀπαράλλακτον καὶ ἀνεμπόδιστον διακονίαν, τὸ κάλλος αὐτοῦ τὸ διηνεκῶς ἀκμάζον, τὴν λαμπηδόνα, τὴν φαιδρότητα, τὴν καθαρότητα, τὴν τοσούτοις ὁμιλοῦσαν σώμασι καὶ μηδαμοῦ μολυνομένην ; Πρὸς δὲ τούτοις, τὴν χρείαν τὴν ἄφατον, τὴν ἐν σπέρμασι, τὴν ἐν φυτοῖς καὶ ἐν σώμασιν ἀνθρώπων, τετραπόδων, ἰχθύων, ἀέρων, λίθων, βοτανῶν, τὴν ἐν γῇ, τὴν ἐν θαλάσσῃ, τὴν ἐν ἀέρι, τὴν ἐν πᾶσιν ἁπλῶς τοῖς ὁρωμένοις ; 14. Πάντα γὰρ αὐτοῦ δεῖται καὶ ἀπολαύει τῆς χρείας καὶ ἀμείνω γίνεται ταύτης μετέχοντα, οὐ σώματα δὲ μόνον, οὐδὲ φυτά, ἀλλὰ καὶ ὕδατα, καὶ λίμναι καὶ πηγαί καὶ ποταμοὶ καὶ αὐτὴ τοῦ ἀέρος ἡ φύσις λεπτυνομένη καὶ καθαιρομένη καὶ διειδεστέρα γινομένη.

15. Διὰ δὴ τοῦτο καὶ ὁ ψαλμῳδὸς τὸ κάλλος αὐτοῦ παραδηλῶσαι βουλόμενος, τὸ διηνεκῶς φαιδρόν, τὴν ἀκμάζουσαν ὥραν, τὸ μηδέποτε διαπίπτον ἄνθος, τήν εὐπρέπειαν, τὴν εὐμορφίαν, τὴν ἀπαραπόδιστον διακονίαν, οὕτω πως ἔλεγεν · " Ἐν τῷ ἡλίῳ

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ἔθετο τὸ σκήνωμα αὐτοῦ", τοῦτ᾽ ἔστιν, ἐν αὐτοῖς τοῖς οὐρανοῖς · τοῦτο, σκήνωμα θεοῦ λέγων, αἰνίττεται. "Καὶ αὐτὸς ὡς νυμφίος ἐκπορευόμενος ἐκ παστοῦ αὐτοῦ." 16. Εἶτα καὶ τὸ εὔκολον τῆς διακονίας αὐτοῦ δηλῶν ἐπήγαγεν · "᾽Αγαλλιάσεται ὡς γίγας δραμεῖν ὁδὸν αὐτοῦ." Εἶτα τὸ διαρκὲς καὶ ἀποχρῶν τῇ οἰκουμένῃ πάσῃ · "᾽Απ᾽ ἄκρου τοῦ οὐρανοῦ ἡ ἔξοδος αὐτοῦ καὶ τὸ κατάντημα αὐτοῦ ἕως ἄκρου τοῦ οὐρανοῦ." Εἶτα τὸ πᾶσι χρήσιμον καὶ ὠφέλιμον · "Καὶ οὐκ ἔστιν ὃς ἀποκρυβήσεται τῆς θέρμης αὐτοῦ." 17. Ἔξεστιν, εἰ μὴ ἀπέκαμες, μαθεῖν αὐτοῦ τὴν πρόνοιαν καὶ ἑτέρωθεν · ἀπὸ τῶν νεφῶν, ἀπὸ τῶν ὡρῶν, ἀπὸ τῶν ῥοπῶν, ἀπὸ τῶν ἀνέμων, ἀπὸ τῆς θαλάσσης καὶ τῶν ἐν αὐτῇ ποικίλων γενῶν, ἀπὸ τῆς γῆς καὶ τῶν ἐν αὐτῇ τετραπόδων, ἑρπετῶν, πτηνῶν τῶν ἀεροπόρων, τῶν χερσαίων, ἀπὸ τῶν ἀμφιβίων τῶν ἐν λίμναις καὶ πηγαῖς καὶ ποταμοῖς, ἀπὸ τῆς οἰκουμένης, ἀπὸ τῆς ἀοικήτου, ἀπὸ τῶν φυομένων σπερμάτων, δένδρων, βοτανῶν, φυτῶν ἐν ταῖς ἐρήμοις, ἐν ταῖς οὐκ ἐρήμοις, 18. ἀπὸ τῶν βλαστανόντων ἐν πεδίοις, ἐν φάραγξιν, ἐν ὄρεσιν, ἐν νάπαις, ἀπὸ τῶν αὐτομάτως φυομένων, ἀπὸ τῶν μετὰ πόνου καὶ γεωργίας, ἀπὸ τῶν ζῴων τῶν ἡμέρων, τῶν ἀνημέρων, τῶν ἀγρίων, τῶν χειροήθων, τῶν μικρῶν, τῶν μεγάλων, ἀπὸ τῶν ἐν χειμῶνι, τῶν ἐν θέρει, τῶν ἐν μετοπώρῳ φαινομένων ὀρνίθων καὶ τετραπόδων, καὶ ἰχθύων καὶ φυτῶν καὶ βοτανῶν, ἀπὸ ἐν νυκτὶ γινομένων, ἀπὸ τῶν ἐν ἡμέρᾳ, ἀπὸ τῶν ὑετῶν, ἀπὸ τοῦ μέτρου τῶν ἐνιαυτῶν, ἀπὸ θανάτου, 19. ἀπὸ ζωῆς, ἀπὸ τοῦ πόνου τοῦ συγκεκληρωμένου ἡμῖν, ἀπὸ ἀθυμίας, ἀπὸ ἀνέσεως, ἀπὸ σίτων καὶ ποτῶν τῶν δεδομένων

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ἡμῖν, ἀπὸ τῶν ἐπιτηδευμάτων, ἀπὸ τεχνῶν, ἀπὸ ξυλων, ἀπὸ λίθων, ἀπὸ τῶν μεταλλικῶν ὀρῶν, ἀπὸ τῆς πλεομένης θαλάττης, ἀπὸ τῆς ἀπλώτου, ἀπὸ τῶν νήσων, ἀπὸ τῶν ὁρμων, ἀπὸ τῶν ἀκτῶν, ἀπὸ τῆς ἐπιφανείας τοῦ πελάγους, ἀπὸ τοῦ βαθους τῶν ὑδάτων, ἀπὸ τῆς φύσεως τῶν στοιχείων ἀφ' ὧν ὁ κόσμος ἡμιν συνέστηκεν, ἀπὸ τῆς διατάξεως τῶν καιρῶν, ἀπὸ τῆς διαφορᾶς τοῦ μέτρου τῆς ἡμέρας καὶ τῆς νυκτός, 20. ἀπὸ νόσου καὶ ὑγιείας, ἀπὸ τῶν μελῶν τῶν ἡμετέρων, ἀπὸ τῆς κατασκευῆς τῆς ψυχῆς, ἀπὸ τῶν τεχνῶν καὶ τῆς σοφίας τῆς ἐν αὐταις παρασχεθείσης τῷ τῶν ἀνθρώπων γένει, ἀπὸ τῆς χρειάς τῶν ὑπηρετουμένων ἡμῖν ἀλόγων καὶ φυτῶν καὶ ἑτέρων κτισμάτων, ἀπὸ τῶν μικροτάτων καὶ εὐτελεστάτων ζῴων. Τί γὰρ μελίττης βραχύτερον καὶ εἰδεχθέστερον ; τί δὲ μυρμήκων καὶ τεττίγων εὐτελέστερον ; Ἀλλ' ὅμως καὶ ταῦτα λαμπρὰν ἀφίησι φωνὴν ὑπὲρ τῆς τοῦ θεοῦ προνοίας καὶ δυνάμεως καὶ σοφίας.

21. Διὰ τοῦτο καὶ ὁ προφήτης, ὁ τοσούτου πνεύματος ἠξιωμένος, ἐπιὼν τῆς κτίσεως τὸ σῶμα καὶ ὀλίγα ἄττα διεξελθὼν, ἀνεβόησε μετ' ἐκπλήξεως πολλῆς τὴν θαυμασίαν ἐκείνην φωνήν · "Ὡς ἐμεγαλύνθη τὰ ἔργα σου, Κύριε, πάντα ἐν σοφίᾳ ἐποίησας."

22. Καὶ ταῦτα πάντα, ἄνθρωπε, διὰ σέ. Καὶ γὰρ καὶ ἄνεμοι διὰ σὲ -- ἐπὶ γὰρ τὴν ἀρχὴν τὸν λόγον ἐπαναξομεν παλιν -- ἵνα τὰ σώματα πεπονηκότα ῥιπίζωσιν, ἵνα τὸν ἀπὸ τοῦ βορβόρου μολυσμὸν καὶ τὴν γινομένην βαρύτητα ἀπὸ τοῦ καπνοῦ καὶ τῶν καμίνων καὶ ἑτέρων ἀναθυμιάσεων διακαθαίρωσιν, ἵνα τὴν ἐκ τῆς ἀκτῖνος θερμότητα παραμυθῶνται, ἵνα κοῦφον ποιῶσι τὸ

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πνῖγος, ἵνα τὰ σπέρματα τρέφωσιν, ἵνα τὰ φυτὰ αὔξωσιν, ἵνα σοι καὶ ἐν θαλάσσῃ συνοδοιπορῶσι καὶ ἐν γῇ τῆς γεωργίας ὑπηρέται γένωνται, ἐκεῖ μὲν βέλους ὀξύτερον τὰ πλοῖα παραπέμποντες, οὕτω τόν πλοῦν κοῦφον καὶ εὐμαρῆ κατασκευάζοντες, 23. ἐνταῦθα δὲ μετὰ σοῦ τὰς ἅλωνας ἀνακαθαίροντες καὶ τὰ ἄχυρα τοῦ καρποῦ διαχωρίζοντες καὶ τὴν ἐκ τῆς ἐργασίας ταλαιπωρίαν ἐπικουφίζοντες, ἵνα σοι τὸν ἀέρα κοῦφον καὶ προσηνῆ κατασκευάσωσιν, ἵνα σε καὶ ἑτέρωθεν τέρπωσι, νῦν μὲν γλυκύ καὶ προσηνὲς συρίζοντες, νῦν δὲ ῥεῖμα φυτοῖς προσβάλλοντες καὶ πέταλα δένδρων σείοντες, 24. ἵνα σοι τὸν ὕπνον καὶ θέρους καὶ ἔαρος ὥρᾳ ἡδίω καὶ μελίτος γλυκύτερον ἐργάσωνται, ἵν', ὅπερ ἐπὶ τῶν δένδρων ποιοῦσι, τοῦτο καὶ ἐπὶ τῶν θαλαττίων νώτων ἐργαζόμενοι, ἐπί τε τῶν ποταμίων ναμάτων καὶ τὴν ἐπιφάνειαν αὐτῶν μετεωρίζοντες, πολλήν σοι ἐντεῦθεν παρέχωσι τὴν ἀπὸ τῆς θέας τέρψιν καὶ πρὸ τῆς τέρψεως δὲ ταύτης καὶ ὠφέλειαν μεγίστην.

25. Καὶ γὰρ καὶ τοῖς ὕδασιν οὗτοι καὶ ἄλλως χρήσιμοι, οὐκ ἀφιέντες διηνεκῶς ἑστῶτα τὰ ὕδατα κατασήπεσθαι, ἀλλὰ τῷ συνεχῶς αὐτὰ κινεῖν καὶ ἀναρριπίζειν νεαρὰ καὶ ἀκμάζοντα καθιστῶντες καὶ πρὸς τροφὴν τῶν ἐν αὐτοῖς νηχομένων ζῴων ἐπιτηδειότερα.

26. Εἰ δὲ καὶ αὐτὴν βουληθείης περιεργάζεσθαι τὴν νύκτα, ὄψει καὶ ἐντεῦθεν πολλὴν τοῦ ποιητοῦ τὴν πρόνοιαν. Καὶ γὰρ ἀναπαύει σοι τὸ σῶμα πεπονηκὸς καὶ τὰ μέλη σοι κατατεινόμενα τοῖς μεθημερινοῖς πόνοις ἀνίησι καὶ χαλᾷ, ἀλλοιοῦσα καὶ πρὸς ἀκμὴν διὰ τῆς ἡσυχίας ἐπανάγουσα πάλιν · 27. οὐ μόνον δὲ,

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ἀλλὰ καὶ τῶν μεθημερινῶν σε ἀπαλλάττει λυπῶν καὶ τῶν ἀκαίρων ἀνίησι φροντίδων · πολλάκις δὲ καὶ νοσοῦντος πυρετόν ἔσβεσεν, ἀντιφάρμακον ὕπνον ἐπάξασα καὶ τὴν τῶν ἰατρῶν ἀπορουμένην τέχνην εἰς εὔδιον ὁρμίσασα λιμένα καὶ πολλῶν ἀπαλλάξασα πόνων. Καὶ τοσαύτη αὐτῆς ἡ χρεία, τηλικαύτη ἡ ὠφέλεια ὡς καὶ τὴν ἡμέραν πολλάκις παραπόλλυσθαι τοῖς ἐν αὐτῇ σχολάζειν ἀποστερηθεῖσιν. 28. Εἰ γάρ τις ἀνέλοι τῷ λόγῳ τὴν τῆς νυκτὸς ἡσυχίαν καὶ τὴν ἄνεσιν καὶ τὴν ἀνακωχήν, δι' ἧς ἅπαντα ἀναπαύονται καὶ ψυχὴ πεπονηκυῖα καὶ σῶμα ταλαιπωρηθὲν ἀκαμαζούσῃ τῇ διανοίᾳ τῆς μεθ' ἡμέραν ἐργασίας ἅπτεσθαι παρασκευάζει, ἄχρηστον ὄψεται τὸ ζῷον τοῦτο γινόμενον. 29. Εἰ δέ τις προσθείη τὰς νύκτας ταῖς ἡμέραις ἐγρηγορῶς καὶ ἐργαζόμενος ἢ καὶ ἀργῶν καὶ ἐπὶ πλεόν τοῦτο ποιήσειεν, ἀποθανεῖται εὐθέως ἤ, εἰ μὴ τοῦτο, νόσῳ πάντως μακρᾷ παραδοθείς, οὐδὲν ἀπὸ τῆς ἡμέρας καρπώσεται εἰς τὴν τῆς οἰκείας χρείας ἐνέργειαν, τῆς δυνάμεως αὐτῷ κατασβεσθείσης.

30. Εἰ δὲ καὶ ἐπὶ τὸν ἄπειρον τῶν ἰχθύων δῆμον ἁπλώσαιμεν τὸν λόγον, τῶν ἐν λίμναις, τῶν ἐν πηγαῖς, τῶν ἐν ποταμοῖς, τῶν ἐν τῇ πλεομένῃ, τῶν ἐν τῇ ἁπλώτῳ θαλάττῃ ἢ καὶ τὰ ἄφατα τῶν ὀρνίθων κατίδοιμεν ἔθνη, τῶν ἐν ἀέρι, τῶν ἐν γῇ, τῶν ἐν ὕδασιν ὁμοῦ καὶ γῇ -- καὶ γάρ ἐστιν ἀμφίβια πολλὰ ἐν αὐτοῖς -- τῶν ἀγρίων, τῶν ἡμέρων, τῶν ἀγρίων μέν, τιθασσευομένων δέ, τῶν δι' ὅλου μενόντων ἀγρίων, τῶν ἐσθεομένων, τῶν οὐκ ἐσθιομένων καὶ περιεργασαίμεθα ἑκάστου καὶ κάλλος καὶ πτερὸν καὶ φωνὴν ᾠδικήν, 31. ἔτι τε τὰς διαφορὰς μόνον αὐτῶν εἰ'

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καταμάθοιμεν καὶ ᾠδῆς καὶ τραπέζης καὶ διαγωγῆς καὶ τὰς διατριβὰς καὶ τὰ ἤθη καὶ τὰς χρείας καὶ τὰς διακονίας ἃς παρέχουσιν ἡμῖν πάσας ἐπέλθοιμεν καὶ τὰ μεγέθη καὶ τὴν βραχύτητα καὶ τὰς ὠδῖνας καὶ τὴν ἀνατροφὴν καὶ τὴν πολλὴν ἐν τούτοις καὶ ἄφατον ποικιλίαν καὶ τὸ αὐτὸ δὴ τοῦτο καὶ ἐπὶ ἰχθύων ποιήσαιμεν καὶ ἐντεῦθεν ἔλθοιμεν καὶ ἐπὶ τὰς βοτάνας, τὰς πανταχοῦ τῆς γῆς φυομένας, ἑκάστου τε τούτων καὶ καρπὸν ἴδοιμεν καὶ χρείαν καὶ εὐωδίαν καὶ ὄψιν καὶ θέσιν καὶ φύλλα καὶ χρῶμα, καὶ σχῆμα καὶ μέγεθος καὶ μικρότητα καὶ ὠφέλειαν, καὶ ἐργασίας τρόπους, 32. καὶ φλοιῶν καὶ στελεχῶν καὶ κλάδων διαφορὰς καὶ λειμῶνας καὶ παραδείσους, εἶτα μετέλθοιμεν ἐπὶ τὰ ποικίλα ἀρώματα καὶ τοὺς παντοδαποὺς τόπους αὐτῶν περιεργασαίμεθα καὶ τοὺς τρόπους τῆς εὑρέσεως καὶ τῆς ἐπιμελείας καὶ τῆς γεωργίας καὶ ὅτι πρὸς ἰατρείαν ἡμῖν συντελεῖ · καὶ μετὰ τούτων πάλιν, εἰ ἐπὶ τὰ μεταλλικὰ ἔτι χωρήσαιμεν ὄρη, πολλὰ ὄντα κἀκεῖνα καὶ ὅσα ἕτερα πολλῷ πλείονα κατὰ τὴν κτίσιν διερευνήσαιμεν, ποῖος λόγος ἢ ποῖος ἡμῖν διαρκέσει χρόνος πρὸς τὴν τούτων ἀκριβῆ κατανόησιν ; 33. Καὶ ταῦτα ἅπαντα, ἄνθρωπε, διὰ σὲ καὶ τέχναι διὰ σὲ καὶ ἐπιτηδεύματα καὶ πόλεις καὶ κῶμαι καὶ ὕπνος διὰ σὲ καὶ θάνατος διὰ σὲ καὶ ζωὴ διὰ σὲ καὶ αὔξησις καὶ φύσεως ἔργα τοσαῦτα καὶ τοιοῦτος ὁ κόσμος διὰ σὲ νῦν καὶ πάλιν ἀμείνων διὰ σέ. Ὅτι γὰρ ἀμείνων ἔσται καὶ τοῦτο διὰ σέ, ἄκουσον τί φησιν ὁ Παῦλος · "Ὅτι καὶ αὐτὴ ἡ κτίσις ἐλευθερωθήσεται ἀπὸ τῆς δουλείας τῆς φθορᾶς" τοῦτ ' ἔστιν, ἀπὸ τοῦ εἶναι φθαρτή. Καὶ πῶς καὶ τῆς τοσαύτης ἀπολαύσεται τιμῆς διὰ σὲ

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δηλῶν ἐπήγαγεν "Εἰς τὴν ἐλευθερίαν τῆς δόξης τῶν τέκνων τοῦ θεοῦ". 34. Εἰ δὲ μὴ μακρὸν σφόδρα καὶ ὑπὲρ τὸ μέτριον ἐποιούμην τὸν λόγον, πολλὰ ἄν καὶ περὶ θανάτου ἐφιλοσόφησα καὶ ἐν τούτῳ μάλιστα ἐδείκνυον τὴν σοφίαν τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ τὴν πρόνοιαν καὶ πολλὰ περὶ φθορᾶς, περὶ ἰχῶρος, περὶ σκωλήκων καὶ περὶ τέφρας εἶπον ἄν, ἅπερ μάλιστα θρηνοῦσιν οἱ πολλοὶ καὶ ἀποδύρονται, ὅτι εἰς τέφραν, ὅτι εἰς κόνιν, ὅτι σκώληκας διαλυθήσεται ἡμῶν τὰ σώματα, κἀντεῦθεν ἐδείξαμεν τὴν ἄφατον αὐτοῦ πρόνοιαν καὶ κηδεμονίαν. 35. Ἀπὸ γὰρ τῆς αὐτῆς προνοίας, ἀπὸ τῆς αὐτῆς ἀγαθότητος ἀφ' ἧς οὐκ ὄντας ἐποίησεν, ἀπὸ τῆς αὐτῆς καὶ ἀποθνήσκειν ἐκέλευσε καὶ τοιοῦτον ἔχειν τὸ τέλος. Εἰ γάρ καὶ διάφορα τὰ γινόμενα, ἀλλὰ μιᾶς εἰσιν ἀγαθότητος. · ὅ τε γὰρ ἀπελθὼν οὐδὲν ἐντεῦθεν παραβλάπτεται, ὅ τε ζῶν τὰ μέγιστα ἐντεῦθεν κερδανεῖ, ἐν ἀλλοτρίῳ σώματι οἰκείαν καρπούμενος ὠφέλειαν. 36. Ὅταν γὰρ ἴδῃ τὸν χθὲς καὶ πρώην μετ' αὐτοῦ βαδίζοντα, τοῦτον εἰς σκώληκας διαλυόμενον καὶ εἰς ἰχῶρα καὶ τέφραν καὶ κόνιν, κἂν αὐτοῦ τοῦ διαβόλου τὴν ἀπόνοιαν ἔχῃ, καταπτήσσει, συστέλλεται, μετριάζει, φιλοσοφεῖν παιδεύεται καὶ τὴν μητέρα τῶν ἀγαθῶν τὴν ταπεινοφροσύνην εἰς τὴν διάνοιαν εἰσοικίζει. 37. Καὶ οὔτε ὁ ἀπελθών τι παρεβλάβη · ἀπολήψεται γὰρ τοῦτο τὸ σῶμα ἀκήρατον καὶ ἄφθαρτον · ὅ τε ἔτι ἐν τῷ σκάμματι ὤν, ἀφ' ὧν οὐδὲν ἕτερος ἐβλάβη, τὰ μέγιστα κερδανεῖ. Οὐχ ὁ τυχὼν διδάσκαλος φιλοσοφίας ὁ θάνατος εἰσηνέχθη εἰς τὸν ἡμέτερον βίον, παιδαγωγῶν τὴν διάνοιαν καὶ τὰ πάθη τῆς ψυχῆς χαλινῶν καὶ τὰ κύματα καταστέλλων καὶ γαλήνην ποιῶν.

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38. Μαθὼν τοίνυν καὶ ἐκ τῶν εἰρημένων καὶ ἐξ ἑτέρων πλειόνων τοῦ φωτὸς τούτου φανερώτερον διαλάμπουσαν τὴν τοῦ θεοῦ πρόνοιαν, μὴ περιεργάζου τὸ περιττά, μηδὲ ἀκίχητα δίωκε, τὰς αἰτίας πάντων ἐξετάζων. Καὶ γὰρ αὐτὸ τὸ εἶναι ἐξ ἀγαθότητος ἡμῖν παρέσχεν οὐ χρείαν ἔχων ἡμῶν τῆς διακονίας. 39. Καὶ χρὴ θαυμάζειν αὐτὸν καὶ προσκυνεῖν, οὐχ ὅτι ἐποίησε μόνον, οὐδ' ὅτι ψυχὴν ἐχαρίσατο ἀσώματον καὶ λιγικήν, οὐδ' ὅτι τῶν ἄλλων ἁπάντων βελτίους εἰργάσατο, οὐδ' ὅτι τὴν βασιλείαν ἐνεχείρισε τῶν ὁρωμένων καὶ σκῆπτρα ἐπέτρεψεν, ἀλλ' ὅτι μηδὲν δεόμενος ἡμῶν. Τὸ γὰρ δὴ θαυμαστὸν τῆς ἀγαθότητος αὐτοῦ τοῦτό ἐστιν ὅτι οὐδὲν χρῄζων ἡμῶν τῆς διακονίας παρήγαγε. Καὶ γὰρ πρὶν γενέσθαι καὶ ἡμᾶς καὶ ἀγγέλους καὶ τὰς ἄνω δυνάμεις, ἦν τὴν οἰκείαν δοξαν ἔχων καὶ τὴν μακαριότητα · διὰ φιλανθρωπίαν δὲ μόνην ἡμᾶς παρήγαγε καὶ ἅπαντα ταῦτα ἐποίησε δι' ἡμᾶς καὶ ἔτι πολλῷ πλειόνα τούτων.

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Chapter Seven

Proof of the providence of God through creation.

1. So for those who are sensible, as I have said, these things suffice. But since some are worldly, difficult to lead, self-willed, and utterly carnal, come, let us demonstrate his providence through his works, as much as we are able. For it is not easy to express it in its entirety, nor in its smallest part, in as much as it is boundless and unutterable, shining through both the small and large constituents of creation, through things visible and invisible. For the time being, let us construct our proof from the visible elements of creation.

2. He created this praiseworthy and all-harmonious universe for no one else but you. For your sake he formed it so beautiful and so great, diverse, costly, completely sufficient for every need, useful, profitable in every way, apt for the sustenance and formation of the body, the growth of the spiritual life, and as a pathway toward the knowledge of God. 3. The angels had no need of this. How could they have need of it if they existed before it came into being? That the angels are much older than creation is indicated by what God says to Job as he reasons with him: "When the stars appeared all my angels praised me and sang with a loud

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voice."[1] That is, they were astounded at the multitude of stars, their beauty, arrangement, usefulness, diversity, lustre, brilliance, harmony, and all their other qualities which they perceive more accurately than we. 4. He not only embellished the sky with stars, but also adorned it with the sun and moon, in each circumstance supplying you at times with much delight and at times with great usefulness. For what is more beautiful than the sky, now illuminated by the sun's rays, now as if by a cast of the eyes, bathing the earth with the light of a boundless throng of stars, providing guides for sailors and wayfarers, in a sense leading them by the hand? 5. The one who cleaves the sea and sits at the helm, surrendering himself to the assaults of waves and the attack of turbulent waters, to the rush of violent winds and the moonless darkness of night, is full of confidence because of the guidance a star provides. 6. And the star, though it is situated in the heights, appears to be close at hand, almost a neighbor, as it precisely guides the sojourner who finds himself at such a distance, bringing him into harbor without ever speaking to him. Indicating pathways to the sight of seafarers, it enables them to cleave the sea in complete safety, marking out the seasons for safe travel, so that sometimes they remain at anchor in harbor. At other times they go out into the sea, filled

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[1] Job 38: 7

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with confidence despite the uncertainty of the future, and do not suffer shipwreck by unexpectedly falling into stormy weather. 7. The stars do not only designate the length of favorable years and seasons, but they also indicate with great precision the hour of each night and the passing of time. This enables those watching to note at what time the fullness of the night has passed, at what time the least amount remains or the contrary. This is useful, not only for sailors, but also for wayfarers, so that they do not begin their journey at an untimely hour of the night, nor remain at home at the fitting hour for their departure. The cycles of the moon, together with those of the stars, are trustworthy regarding this. 8. For just as the sun regulates the hours of the day, so the moon regulates the hours of the night and renders many other services. By pouring out temperate air it produces dew which causes the growth of seeds. It also offers assistance in helping people to organize their own lives, set between the choir of the stars and the lustre of the sun, inferior to the sun but superior to the stars and much greater. 9. No small pleasure and utility is derived from this diversity for those who observe the stars, just as no small advantages: that of predicting favorable times, that gained from knowing the hours, that of understanding how much time has passed, whether it be a long time or short, and that of their indescribable diversity. One can see a very small one and

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ancther much larger and more radiant. Some of them appear at different times. 10. Indeed, the superabundance of ingenious wisdom produces everywhere a great diversity; at the same time that it displays the proof of his personal power to work miracles, it takes thought for the advantage of those watching, offering them many indescribable aids and above all these things, the pleasure gained from contemplating them. 11. Truly, what is more delightful than the sky, at one time unfolded over our heads like a pure, radiant, fine linen cloth, at other times like an embroidered blossoming meadow, displaying its crown? For it is not as pleasant to contemplate a meadow in the day as it is sweet and delightful to gaze on it during the night, crowned on all sides with the stars as thousands of flowers, flowers which never wither away, but always display their own pure and particular beauty. 12. What is more pleasant than the moment between the passing of the night and the rising of the sun's rays, when the sky is crimson with the first glimmers of the rising sun, adorned like a saffron colored cloth? What could be more beautiful than the spectacle of the rising sun about the time of daybreak, in an instant illuminating with its rays all the earth, all the sea, every mountain, all the valleys and hills, shining through all the heavens with the beams of its rays, disrobing visible things from the garment of the night and displaying them naked before our eyes? 13. How could one

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not be amazed by the sun's paths, its consistent course, its unchangeable and unhindered service across so many cycles of years, its continually flourishing beauty, its lustre, its brightness, and its purity, which comes in contact with so many substances and is nowhere defiled? And also before qualities such as its inexpressible utility for the harvest, for plant life, for the constitution of human beings, four-footed creatures, fish, the atmosphere, stones, plants, the earth, the sea, the air -- to speak plainly, for all visible things.

14. For everything needs the sun, profits from its service, and becomes better by sharing in its benefits -- not only bodies and plants, but also waters, marshy lakes, springs, and rivers. The nature of the air itself is lightened and cleansed, becoming more transparent. 15. Because of this the Psalmist, desiring to point out its beauty, its continual radiance, the moment when it reaches its greatest height, its never fading flower, its loveliness, its symmetry, and its unhindered service, spoke in this way: "He has erected his tent in the sun," that is, in the heavens themselves. He is referring to them when he speaks of the tent of God. "And it is like a bridegroom coming out of his nuptial chamber."[2] 16. And then demonstrating the active nature of its service, the Psalmist added: "He

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[2] Psalm 19: 4-5a

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rejoices like a champion running his course." He goes on to show the sufficiency and satisfying nature of the sun's service for the entire world. "Its departure is from one end of heaven and its goal is the other end." He ends by speaking of its usefulness and benefit to everyone. "And there is no one who can hide from its heat."[3]

17. It is possible, if you haven't grown weary, to learn to recognize God's providence by means of other witnesses: from the clouds, from the seasons, from the movement of the stars, from the wind, from the sea and the various kinds of life in it, from the earth and those creatures which live on it -- from four footed creatures, reptiles, birds moving through the air, from those animals living on dry ground and from the amphibians living in swamps, springs, and rivers. One learns of God's providence from the inhabited world and the uninhabited, from sprouting seeds, trees, and plants -- from those living in desert regions and those which don't,

18. from plants budding in the open plains, in ravines, in the mountains, and in valleys, from those which grow by themselves and those which result from hard work and cultivation. One learns of providence from tamed and untamed animals, from savage beasts and those accustomed to human touch, from both small animals and large, from the birds which appear in the winter, summer, and autumn, from

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[3] Psalm 19: 5b-6

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four-footed creatures, fish, plants and herbs, from those which are active in the night and those which are lively during the day, from the rains, from the passing of time, from death, 19. from life, from the hard work which is our lot, from despondency, from relaxation, from the food and drink which have been given to us, from the different manners and customs of life, from the arts, from trees, from stones, from the mountains which contain metals for mining, from the navigable ocean and that which is unnavigable, from the islands, from the harbors, from the sea cliffs, from the appearance of the ocean's surface, from the depth of the waters, from the nature of the fundamental elements from which the earth was composed for us, from the arrangement of the seasons, from the different lengths of the day and the night, 20. from sickness and from health, from the members of our bodies, from the constitution of the soul, from the arts and the wisdom granted to humanity for their exercise, from the usefulness of the benefits obtained by us from animals lacking wisdom, plants and other created things, from the tiniest and most ordinary living creatures. For what is smaller and more ugly than the bee? And what is more ordinary than ants and cicadas? Nevertheless, even these emit a clear voice concerning the providence, power, and wisdom of God. 21. Because of this the prophet, who was deemed worthy to be inspired to such a great extent by the Spirit, approaching the body of creation and having

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recounted some of its details, cried aloud with great amazement that wondrous statement: "How exalted are your works, Lord! You have made everything with wisdom."[4] 22. And all these for you, Friend! Indeed, even the winds were created for your sake -- for we will be returning once again to the beginning of our discourse -- in order to revive our exhausted bodies and to thoroughly cleanse the defilement of mud and mire and the air made heavy by smoke, furnaces, and other fumes. The winds were formed in order to provide relief from the heat of the sun's rays, to lighten the stifling heat of summer, to nourish the seeds, to cause plants to grow, to accompany you on the ocean and to be the farmer's assistants on the earth. At times they propel ships swifter than arrows, making navigation easy and convenient. 23. At other times they sweep the threshing floor with you, separating the chaff from the grain and relieving the strenuous labor of the toil. They were made so that they might render the air light and gentle for you, so as to delight you, sometimes whistling sweetly and gently, at other times softly brushing plants and rustling the leaves of trees, 24. so that in the summer and spring they might produce for you a sleep sweeter and more pleasant than honey. They act on the surface of the sea and the streams of the rivers in the same way that they move among

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[4] Psalm 104: 24

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the trees. They manifest themselves this way so that they might offer you much enjoyment from this sight, and before this delight, great benefit. 25. The winds are useful for the waters in other ways. By continually churning and tossing them, they prevent stagnation and keep them fresh and more useful as food for the creatures that live in them. 26. If you want to subject the night itself to close scrutiny, you will also see there the infinite providence of the creator. For the night provides rest for your exhausted body and relaxes and eases those parts strained by day-time labors, altering their weary state and restoring their strength through rest. 27. And not only this, but the night releases you from the pains of daily life and frees you from untimely anxieties. Often the night quenches the fever of someone who is ill, inducing sleep as an antidote, guiding the uncertain art of the physicians into a peaceful haven and freeing the sufferer from many distresses. Such is the usefulness of the night, so great its advantages, that the one who is deprived of the rest it provides often finds the next day ruined. 28. Indeed, if one would put an end to the rest, relaxation, and respite of the night for the power of reason and reflection, thanks to which all things receive rest and the exhausted soul and spent body prepare to undertake the new day's tasks with renewed vigor, then this living being will be seen to be of little use. 29. Now if one would add night to day, always staying awake

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and working continuously or even spending the time idly and would follow this course to the fullest, death will quickly result, or at least a long illness. No benefit would be reaped from the day for the exercise of a person's own tasks and activities because one's strength would be extinguished. 30. And if we would expand our discussion to the limitless world of fish, those which live in marshy lakes, springs, rivers, and the navigable and unnavigable ocean, or if we would observe the indescribable species of birds, those in the air, those on land, those which live on both land and water -- for there are many amphibians among them -- those which are wild, those which are tame, those which were tamed from their wildness, those which will remain untamed, those which are edible and those which are not; if we would examine carefully the beauty, plumage, and musical voice of each, 31. if we would only observe the diversity of their song, food, and manner of life, and would recount the way they live, their habits, usefulness, all the services they provide for us, their magnificence, their tiny stature, how their young are born and raised, their infinite and indescribable diversity in these characteristics; if we would follow the same procedure with fish and then would pass on to plants -- which spring up all over the earth -- and would study the fruit of each kind, their utility, sweet fragrance, appearance, composition, leaves, color, form, grandeur, small size, the services they provide, the

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different ways they are cultivated, 32. the diversities of bark, stems, and branches, those which grow in prairies and those which grow in gardens; then, if we would proceed to observe their varied fragrances and examine closely their diverse locations, the ways in which we discover them, care for them, cultivate them, and the assistance they contribute to our healing from sickness; if we would then pass on to the ore-filled mountains which are so numerous, if we would investigate carefully the many other aspects of the created world which are even more plentiful, what kind of analysis or what length of time would suffice for the precise observation of all these things? 33. And all these things, Friend, are for your sake -- arts and crafts for you, life's pursuits and activities, cities, villages, sleep for you, death for your sake, life for your sake, growth, so many works of nature and such a magnificent world in its present state for you, a world that will be even better in the future for your sake. Listen to Paul when he writes that the world will be better in the future for your sake: "For the creation itself will be freed from the slavery of corruption," that is, from the reality of being corrupted at the present time. He demonstrated that creation will enjoy such an honor for your sake when he added: "For the freedom of the glory of the children of God."[5] 34. If I had not

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[5] Romans 8: 21

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already made my discourse exceedingly long and exceeded the proper measure, I would have much to say about death from a Christian perspective and would have shown especially in this the wisdom and providence of God. I would have said much concerning corruption, putrefaction, worms, and ashes. Since most people mourn and lament bitterly that our bodies will be reduced to ashes, dust, and worms, I would have shown his unspeakable providence and care from this very reality. 35. For it is by the same providence and the same goodness that he created us, creatures who did not exist until the moment of our creation. By this same providence and goodness he commanded that we die and have this as our end. If there are differences among created things, they have a common source in God's goodness. For the one who has departed is in no way wronged by this occurrence, and the one who lives derives great things from this, reaping the benefit of his own spiritual profit in the body of another. 36. When one sees the person who only yesterday and the day before was walking at his side now decomposing into worms, putrefaction, ashes, and dust, even if one possesses the arrogance of the devil himself, he cowers in fear, is humbled, learns to act in a more level-headed fashion, is taught to think in a more spiritual manner, and introduces into his mind the mother of all goods, humility.
37. And neither is the one who has departed wronged, for he will receive this same body pure and incorruptible. The

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person who is still in this present life gains great things from those in which the other was not wronged. For death has been introduced into our present existence as a teacher of the spiritual life, instructing the understanding, bridling the passions of the soul, quelling its billows and creating calm. 38. Therefore, having learned from what we have said and from many other things, that God's providence shines more brightly than the light of this world, stop inquiring curiously into those matters which exceed your understanding and quit pursuing unattainable things by trying to search out the causes of everything. For he granted existence itself to us out of his goodness and has no need of our service. 39. It is fit to regard him with wonder and to worship him, not only because he created us, nor because he gave us a spiritual and rational soul, nor because he made us better than all other creatures, nor because he entrusted to us the dominion over all visible things and committed the sceptre to us, but rather because he has no need of us. For the wonder of his goodness is this: having no need of our service, he created us. Indeed, before we or angels or the powers above were created, he was already existing, possessing his own glory and blessedness. It is only through love that he created us. He did all these things for our sake and many more other things in addition.

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κεφ. ή. Ὅτι προνοίας ἀπόδειξις καὶ τὸ νόμον δοῦναι καὶ φυσικὸν καὶ γραπτὸν καὶ γενναίους ἄνδρας παρασκεύσαι διδασκάλους γενέσθαι μετοικεσίας τῶν ἀποδεξομένων ἔθνων καὶ τὸ μετὰ ταῦτα κεφάλαιον τῶν ἀγαθῶν χαρίσασθαι τοῦ Μονογενοῦς τὴν παρουσίαν.

1. Διὰ τοῦτο καὶ νόμον γράψας ἔδωκε δι᾽ ἡμᾶς καὶ προφήτας ἀπέστειλε καὶ θαύματα εἰργάσατο καὶ πρὸ τούτων ἁπάντων ὁμοῦ πλάσας τὸν ἄνθρωπον, διδάσκαλον αὐτῷ τὸν ἔμφυτον ἐναπέθετο νόμον, ὥσπερ πλοίῳ κυβερνήτην καὶ ἡνίοχον ἵππῳ, τοῖς λογισμοῖς ἡμῶν ἐπιστήσας αὐτόν. Οὕτω γοῦν καὶ Ἄβελ αὐτὸν ἔγνω, οὐ γραμμάτων ὄντων, οὐ προφητῶν, οὐκ ἀποστόλων, οὐ νόμου γραπτοῦ τινος ἐνηχοῦντος, ἀλλὰ τὸν ἔμφυτον ἔχων νόμον. 2. Οὕτως ὁ Κάϊν · ἀμφότεροι γὰρ αὐτὸν ᾔδεσαν καὶ τὴν δεσποτείαν ἐπεγίνωσκον, ἀλλ᾽ οὐκ ἀμφότεροι τὴν αὐτὴν ἦλθον ὁδόν · ἀλλ᾽ ὁ μὲν τὴν τῆς κακίας, ὁ δὲ τὴν τῆς ἀρετῆς.

Καὶ ὅμως οὐδὲ οὕτως αὐτὸν ἐγκατέλιπεν, ἀλλὰ καὶ πεσόντα καὶ ὑποσκελισθέντα ἐπηνώρθου καὶ ἐπιμελείας ἀπολαύειν ἐποίει · καὶ πρῶτον μὲν παραινῶν καὶ συμβουλεύων, ὕστερον δὲ τῷ φόβῳ, τῷ τρόμῳ νουθετῶν, παιδεύων, διδάσκων. 3. Ἐπειδὴ δὲ τοσοῦτον προὔδωκαν δῶρον οἱ πολλοὶ τῶν ἀνθρώπων, τὴν ἀπὸ τῆς φυσικῆς διδασκαλίας λέγω ὠφέλειαν, οὐδὲ οὕτως αὐτοὺς κατέλιπεν, οὐδὲ πανωλεθρίᾳ παρέδωκεν, ἀλλ᾽ ἔμεινε διὰ πραγμάτων, δι᾽ εὐεργεσιῶν, διὰ κολάσεων παιδεύων, νουθετῶν, διὰ τῆς κτίσεως αὐτῆς καθ᾽ ἡμέραν ἐργαζομένης καὶ τὴν διακονίαν πληρούσης τὴν εἰωθυῖαν, διὰ τῶν παραδόξως παρὰ τὰ εἰωθότα γινομένων, διὰ τῶν ἐν ἀρχῇ δικαίων.

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εἰωθότα γινομένων, διὰ τῶν ἐν ἀρχῇ δικαίων.

4. Καὶ γὰρ ἄνδρας θαυμαστοὺς καὶ φιλοσοφίας γέμοντας ἀπὸ τόπων εἰς τόπους μετήγαγε. Οἷον τὸν Ἀβραὰμ νῦν μὲν εἰς Παλαιστίνην, νῦν δὲ εἰς Συρίαν · Μωυσέα πάλιν εἰς Αἴγυπτον καὶ τοὺς τρεῖς παῖδας εἰς Βαβυλῶνα καὶ τὸν Δανιηλ καὶ τὸν Ἰεζεκιήλ, τὸν δὲ Ἱερεμίαν εἰς Αἴγυπτον. Καὶ νόμον ἔδωκε καὶ προφήτας ἀπέστειλε καὶ ἔπληξε καὶ ἀνῆκε καὶ αἰχμαλωσίᾳ παρέδωκε καὶ ἐλευθερίας ἠξίωσε καὶ οὐ διέλιπεν ἐξ ἀρχῆς εὡς τέλους πάντα ποιῶν καὶ πραγματευόμενος ὑπὲρ τοῦ γένους τοῦ ἡμετέρου. 5. Οὐδὲ γὰρ ἠρκέσθη τῇ ἀπὸ τῆς κτισεως διδασκαλίᾳ πρὸς θεογνωσίαν φερούσῃ μόνον, ἀλλ ' ἐπειδὴ πολλοὶ παρὰ τὴν οἰκείαν ἀγνωμοσύνην οὐδὲν ἐντεῦθεν ἀπωάντο καὶ ἑτέρας ἔτεμεν ὁδοὺς διδασκαλίας καὶ τέλος τὸ κεφάλαιον τῶν ἀγαθῶν εἰργάσατο καὶ τὸν Υἱον ἀπέστειλε τὸν ἑαυτοῦ.

6. Καὶ ὁ τῆς αὐτῆς φύσεως ὢν αὐτῷ, γίνεται ὅπερ ἐγω καὶ ἐπι γῆς βαδίζων τοῖς ἀνθρώποις συνανεστρέφετο δι ' ὧν ἐθαυματούργει, δι ' ὧν ἐπηγγέλλετο, δι ' ὧν ἐδίδου. Καὶ γὰρ τὰ μὲν ἐντεῦθεν ἤδη παρέσχε, τὰ δὲ προς το μέλλον ἐταμιεύσατο, ἃ καὶ ὅτι δώσει καὶ δι ' ὧν ἔτι περιὼν ἐπι γῆς θαυμάτων εἰργάσατο, δῆλον ἐποίησε καὶ διὰ τῆς μετὰ ταῦτα ὧν προεῖπε πάντων ἐκβάσεως · "Τίς λαλήσει τὰς δυναστείας τοῦ κυρίου, ἀκουστὰς ποιήσει πάσας τὰς αἰνέσεις αὐτοῦ ;" Τίς οὐκ ἂν ἐκσταίη, τίς οὐκ ἂν φρίξειε τὴν ἄφατον αὐτοῦ κηδεμονίαν, ἐννοῶν πῶς ὑπὲρ τῶν ἀγνωμόνων οἰκετῶν τόν μονογενῆ Υἱὸν εἰς θάνατον ἐκδέδωκε, θάνατον τὸν ἐπαράτον, τὸν ἐπονείδιστον, θάνατον τὸν τῶν καταδίκων ;

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μέρει χάριτος ἐθάπτετο καὶ σήμαντρα αὐτοῦ τῷ μνήματι ἐπετίθετο · καὶ ταῦτα ἅπαντα ὑφίστατο διὰ σὲ καὶ τὴν κηδεμονίαν τὴν σήν, ἵνα τῆς ἁμαρτίας ἡ τυραννὶς ἀναιρεθῇ, ἵνα καθαιρεθῇ τοῦ διαβόλου ἡ ἀκρόπολις, ἵνα τμηθῇ τοῦ θανάτου τὰ νεῦρα, ἵνα ἀνοιγῶσιν ἡμῖν αἱ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ πυλαι, ἵνα ἀφανισθῇ ἡ ἁρά, ἵνα ἡ προτέρα καταδίκη λυθῇ, ἵνα μαθῇς ὑπομονήν, ἵνα παιδευθῇς καρτερίαν, ἵνα μηδέν σε τῶν τοῦ παρόντος βίου λυπῇ, μὴ θάνατος, μὴ ὕβρις, μὴ λοιδορίαι, μὴ σκώμματα, μὴ μάστιγες, μὴ ἐχθρῶν ἐπιβουλαί, μὴ ἐπήρειαι, μὴ ἔφοδοι, μὴ συκιφαντίαι, μὴ ὑπολήψεις πονηραί, μὴ ἄλλο τῶν τοιούτων μηδέν.

8. Διὰ γὰρ πάντων καὶ αὐτὸς ἦλθε καὶ πάντων σοι τούτων ἐκοινώνησε καὶ διὰ πάντων μεθ' ὑπερβολῆς ἐκράτησε, παιδευών σε καὶ διδάσκων μηδὲν τῶν τοιούτων δεδοικέναι. Καὶ οὐδὲ τούτοις ἠρκέσθη μόνον, ἀλλὰ καὶ ἀνελθὼν εἰς οὐρανοὺς Πνεύματος ἁγίου ἐχαρίσατο χάριν ἄφατον καὶ ἀποστόλους ἔπεμψε τοὺς πρὸς τοῦτο διακονησομένους.

9. Καὶ ὁρῶν αὐτοὺς τοὺς τῆς ζωῆς κήρυκας τὰ μυρία πάσχοντας κακά, μαστιζομένους, ὑβριζομένους, καταποντιζομένους, κατατεινομένους λιμῷ καὶ δίψει, καθ' ἑκάστην ἡμέραν ἀγχομένους, θανάτοις συζῶντας καθημερινοῖς, ἠνείχετο διὰ σὲ καὶ τὴν κηδεμονίαν τὴν σήν. Διὰ σέ, ἄνθρωπε, καὶ βασιλείαν ἡτοίμασε, διὰ σὲ τὰ ἀγαθὰ τὰ ἀπόρρητα, τὴν λῆξιν ἐκείνην τὴν ἐν οὐρανοῖς, τὰς μονὰς τὰς διαφόρους καὶ ποικίλας, τὴν μακαριότητα, τὴν οὐδέποτε λόγῳ ἑρμηνευθῆναι δυναμένην.

10. Τοσαῦτα οὖν ἔχων δείγματα αὐτοῦ τῆς προνοίας, τὰ ἐν τῇ Καινῇ, τὰ ἐν τῇ Παλαιᾷ, τὰ ἐν τῷ παρόντι βίῳ, τὰ ἐν τῷ

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μακαριότητα, τὴν οὐδέποτε λόγῳ ἑρμηνευθῆναι δυναμένην.
10. Τοσαῦτα οὖν ἔχων δείγματα αὐτοῦ τῆς προνοίας, τὰ ἐν τῇ Καινῇ, τὰ ἐν τῇ Παλαιᾷ, τὰ ἐν τῷ παρόντι βίῳ, τὰ ἐν τῷ μέλλοντι, τὰ ἐσόμενα, τὰ γενόμενα, τὰ καθ᾽ ἑκάστην ἐπιτελούμενα τὴν ἡμέραν, τὰ ἐξ ἀρχῆς, τὰ ἐν τῷ μέσῳ, τὰ ἐν τῷ τέλει, τὰ διηνεκῶς, τὰ περὶ σῶμα, τὰ περὶ ψυχήν, καὶ νιφάδας ὁρῶν πάντοθεν φερομένας ἀποδείξεων, ἀνακηρυττούσας αὐτοῦ τὴν πρόνοιαν, ἀμφιβάλλεις ἔτι ;
11. Ἀλλ᾽ οὐκ ἀμφιβάλλεις, πιστεύεις δὲ ὅτι προνοεῖ καὶ πέπεικας σαυτὸν τοῦτο. Οὐκοῦν μηδὲν περιεργάζου πλέον, εἰδὼς τοῦτο σαφῶς ὅτι Δεσπότην ἔχεις πατρὸς φιλοστοργότερον καὶ μητρὸς κηδεμονικώτερον, νυμφίου καὶ νύμφης ἐρῶντα ἐρωτικώτερον, οἰκείαν ἀνάπαυσιν τὴν σὴν ἡγούμενον σωτηρίαν καὶ μᾶλλον ἐπὶ ταύτῃ χαίροντα ἢ σὺ ἐπὶ ἀπαλλαγῇ κινδύνων καὶ θανάτων -- ὅπερ ἔδειξα διὰ τοῦ Ἰωνᾶ -- καὶ πᾶν εἶδος ἀγάπης ἐπιδεικνύμενον, 12. ὁ πατὴρ περὶ παῖδας ἔχει ἢ μήτηρ περὶ ἔκγονα, ὁ ἀμπελουργὸς περὶ φυτά, ὁ οἰκοδόμος περὶ τέχνην, ὁ νυμφίος περὶ νύμφην, ὁ νεανίσκος περὶ παρθένον καὶ βουλόμενον ἀποστῆσαι σου τὰ κακά, ὅσον ἀφέστηκεν ἀνατολὴ τῆς δύσεως, ὅσον, ὑψηλότερος τῆς γῆς ὁ οὐρανός -- καὶ γὰρ καὶ τοῦτο ἀπεδείξαμεν, -- μᾶλλον δὲ οὐ τοσοῦτον μόνον, ἀλλὰ καὶ πολλῷ πλέον · καθάπερ ἐδείξαμεν τὸν περὶ τούτων κινοῦντες λόγον καὶ παραινέσαντες μὴ μέχρι τῶν εἰκόνων ἑστάναι, ἀλλ᾽ ὑπερβαίνειν τοῖς λογισμοῖς. Ἀνερμήνευτος γὰρ ἡ τοῦ θεοῦ πρόνοια καὶ ἀκατάληπτος αὐτοῦ ἡ κηδεμονία, ἄῤῥητος ἡ ἀγαθότης καὶ ἀνεξιχνίαστος ἡ φιλανθρωπία.

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ἀνάμεστον, ἰατρὸν μὲν μηδέποτε πολυπραγμονεῖν τέμνοντα, καίοντα, πικρὰ ἐπιτιθέντα φάρμακα, κἂν οἰκέτης ᾖ, ἀλλὰ κεῖσθαι σιγῇ τὸν δεσπότην ταῦτα πάσχοντα καὶ χάριν εἰδέναι καὶ τῆς καύσεως αὐτῷ καὶ τῆς τομῆς καὶ τῶν φαρμάκων καὶ ταῦτα ἐπ' ἀδήλῳ τῷ μέλλοντι -- πολλοὶ γὰρ πολλοὺς καὶ ἀπέκτειναν ταῦτα ποιήσαντες, -- καὶ παραχωρεῖν αὐτῷ μετὰ πολλῆς τῆς ὑποταγῆς ταῦτα ποιοῦντι, καὶ ἐπὶ ναύτου δὲ τὸ αὐτὸ τοῦτο ποιεῖν καὶ οἰκοδόμου καὶ ἐπὶ τῶν τὰ ἄλλα ἐπιτηδεύματα μετιόντων.

14. Λέγω δὲ καταγέλαστον εἶναι νομίζειν, τὸ τὸν ἰδιώτην καὶ ἄπειρον ἀπαιτεῖν τὰς αἰτίας τῶν γινομένων ἁπάντων τὸν τεχνίτην, τὴν δὲ ἄφατον σοφίαν ἐκείνην, τὴν ἄφραστον, τὴν ἄρρητον, τὴν ἀκατάληπτον περιεργάζεσθαι καὶ ζητεῖν διὰ τί τὸ καὶ τὸ γέγονε καὶ ταῦτα εἰδότας σαφῶς, ὅτι ἀδιάπτωτος ἡ σοφία αὕτη, ὅτι πολλὴ ἀγαθότης αὐτοῦ, ὅτι ἄρρητος ἡ πρόνοια, ὅτι πάντα πρὸς τὸ τέλος ἅπαντι χρηστὸν τὰ παρ' αὐτοῦ γινόμενα εἰς ἡμᾶς · μόνον εἰ μὴ τὰ ἡμέτερα διακόπτοιτο, ὅτι οὐδένα ἀπολέσθαι βούλεται, ἀλλὰ σῶσαι. Πῶς οὐχ ὑπερβαλλούσης μανίας, τὸν πάντας σῶσαι καὶ βουλόμενον καὶ δυνάμενον περιεργάζεσθαι ἐκ προοιμίων καὶ εὐθέως καὶ μηδὲ τὸ τέλος ἀναμένειν τῶν γινομένων ;

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Chapter Eight

A proof of providence is the gift of the natural and written law and the preparation of noble men who were teachers of the nations who welcomed them as they emigrated. Lastly, the foremost blessing was the gift of the appearance of the only begotten Son.

1. For this reason he gave us a law he had composed for our sake, sent prophets, worked wonders, and before all these things, having formed a human being, he gave the natural law to him as a teacher, similar to a helmsman for a ship or a rider for a horse, having subjected our reasonings to its influence. Truly, Abel recognized it. Though there were no written documents, no prophets, no apostles, and no teaching coming from a written law, he still had the natural law.
2. We have the same situation with Cain. Both of them knew it and recognized its sovereignty, but they did not follow the same road. One followed that of wickedness and the other that of virtue. Nevertheless, God did not abandon him, even though he had fallen after being dragged down. He set him up again and surrounded him with his care; first, by advising and counseling him, and second, by warning him with fear and trembling, chastening and teaching him. 3. Since most of humanity abandoned such a great gift -- I am speaking of the assistance that comes from the teaching of

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nature -- he did not simply abandon them, nor hand them over to utter destruction, but he abided his time, educating and warning them through his benefits and punishments, through the daily working of creation itself and the execution of its normal routine, through the occurrence of events contrary to the customary processes of nature, and through the righteous ones present from the very beginning.

4. Indeed, God conveyed admirable men filled with an awareness of spiritual truth from one place to another. He first caused Abraham to go into Palestine and then into Egypt, and Jacob into Syria. He caused Moses to go into Egypt, the three children into Babylonia, and Daniel, Ezekiel, and Jeremiah into Egypt. And he gave a law, sent prophets, struck his people, left them alone, delivered them into captivity, gave them their freedom, and from beginning to end never ceased his concern and his action on behalf of our race. 5. Because he was not satisfied with the instruction from nature which brings the knowledge of God -- since many people out of their own ignorance derived no benefit from this -- he opened up other pathways to this knowledge; at last he accomplished the foremost of his kindnesses. He sent his own Son.

6. The one who is of the same nature as God becomes what I am, walking on the earth, mingling with human beings, among whom he performed wonders, made promises, and accomplished them. For he already granted some of them while on earth

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and stored up others for the future. Through the miracles which he performed while he still remained on earth and the accomplishment of all the things he had spoken of beforehand, he made it certain that he will also give all he has promised. "Who will speak of the mighty acts of the Lord, or broadcast all his praises?"[1] Who would not be beside himself, who would not shudder before his indescribable concern, as one ponders how God delivered up his only begotten Son to death for ungrateful house slaves, to a cursed and disgraceful death, to the death of condemned criminals? 7. He was nailed to a high cross, bound, thrashed with sticks, struck on the face, ridiculed, buried through kindness, and seals were placed upon his tomb. And he submitted to all these things for your sake and because of his great care, so that the sovereignty of sin might be destroyed, that the citadel of the devil might be demolished, that the cords of death might be cut, that the gates of heaven might be opened to us, that the effect of the curse might be done away with, that the first sentence of condemnation might be annulled, that you might learn endurance, that you might be trained in patience, that none of the things of the present life might distress you -- neither death, nor despiteful treatment, nor abuse, nor gibes, nor whips, nor the treacheries of enemies, nor wanton

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[1] Psalm 106: 2

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insults, nor attacks, nor false accusations, nor evil suspicions, nor anything else such as these. 8. For he himself passed through all these things and shared in them with you; he surpassingly conquered all of these things, training and teaching you not to be anxious about any of these trials. Still, he was not satisfied only with this, but having returned to heaven he freely gave the indescribable gift of the Holy Spirit and sent the apostles to minister as his servants.

9. And we see these heralds of life themselves suffering from countless evils: whipped, insulted, drowned, afflicted by hunger and thirst, gripped each day with anguish, living each day in the midst of violent deaths; he allowed this for your sake and out of concern for you. For your sake, Friend, he prepared a kingdom; for your sake indescribable good things, that portion which is in heaven, distinctive and manifold dwelling places, that blessedness which cannot be adequately spelled out by any human expression.

10. Therefore, possessing such proofs of his providence: proofs in the New Testament and the Old, in the present life, in the life to come, in things which will be, in things which have already occurred, in the events of everyday life, in things which are at the beginning, middle, and end, in those things which continually take place, in things concerning the body and the soul, seeing clouds of proofs coming from all directions bearing witness to God's

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providence, do you still doubt? 11. But you do not doubt. Rather, you believe that he exercises his providence and are fully persuaded of this. Therefore, don't be posing any more curious and inappropriate questions, knowing clearly that you have a master who is more affectionate than a father, more caring than a mother, more loving than a bridegroom and bride fervently in love, considering his own rest as your salvation and rejoicing more in it than you rejoice in your deliverance from danger and death -- which I have shown you through the example of Jonah; exhibiting every kind of love:

12. that which a father has for his children or a mother for her offspring, that of a vinedresser for his vines, that of a bridegroom for his bride, that of a young man for a young woman; desiring to place as great a distance between you and misfortunes as there is between the East and West or the heaven and the earth -- for this, too, we have demonstrated and not only this, but much more, as we have shown by stirring up your understanding through the use of images and then urging you not to stop at the illustrations, but to go beyond the arguments. For the providence of God is beyond understanding, his care is incomprehensible, his goodness is indescribable, and his love for humanity is unsearchable. 13. Therefore, recognizing all the things through which he has revealed himself, through which he has acted and will act, don't indiscretely inquire into things,

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nor be unduly concerned, nor say: "Why is this like this? To what purpose is this?" Wouldn't this be an insane way to act, full of arrogance and madness? One doesn't inquire too inquisitively of the physician as he cuts, burns and prescribes bitter medicines, even if he is a house servant. Rather, the master keeps silence, suffering these things, and feels thankful for the cauterization, wound, and medicines, even though the future remains uncertain -- for many have been killed by physicians who practiced these techniques; one yields to him in extreme submission, just as we submit ourselves to the sailor, architect, and to other people who practice various types of vocations. 14. I am arguing that if it is ridiculous to think that an ignorant and inexperienced person can ask an artisan the why and wherefore of all he creates, it is also ridiculous to curiously inquire into that indescribable wisdom, a wisdom that is ineffable, inexpressible, and incomprehensible, and to seek after the why and wherefore of what has come to be, recognizing clearly that this wisdom is infallible, that his goodness is boundless, that his providence is inexpressible, that in every circumstance all things that come to us from him have a favorable outcome -- provided that our own activities don't get in the way -- for he has no desire for anyone to perish, but to save. Isn't it absolutely insane to interrogate inappropriately and immediately -- at the beginning of events -- the one who is willing and able to

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save everyone, and not to await the final outcome of all that comes to pass?

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Κεφ. θ΄. Ὅτι οὔτε περιεργάζεσθαι χρὴ καὶ ὅτι δεῖ ἀναμένειν τὰ τέλη τῶν πραγμάτων

1. Μάλιστα μὲν γὰρ οὔτε ἐκ προοιμίων, οὔτε μετὰ ταῦτα πολυπραγμονεῖν δεῖ · εἰ δὲ οὕτω περίεργος εἶ καὶ πολυπράγμων, ἀνάμενε τὸ τέλος καὶ σκόπει πού ταῦτα ἅπαντα καὶ μὴ θορυβοῦ, μηδὲ ταράττου ἐκ προοιμίων. Ἐπεὶ καὶ τὸν χρυσοχόον ἄπειρός τις ὁρῶν ἐν ἀρχῇ τήκοντα τὸν χρυσὸν καὶ τῇ τεφρᾳ ἀναμιγνύντα καὶ τοῖς ἀχύροις, εἰ μὴ τὸ τέλος ἀναμείνειεν, ἡγήσεται ἀπολωλέναι τὸ χρυσίον · εἰ δὲ καὶ ἐν θαλάττῃ τις τεχθεὶς καὶ τραφείς, εἶτα ἀθρόον εἰς τὴν μεσόγειον μετοικισθεὶς καὶ καθ' ὅλου τῆς περὶ τὴν γῆν ἐπιμελείας ἀνήκοος ὤν, 2. εἶδεν τὸν σῖτον τὸν ἀποκείμενον καὶ φυλαττόμενον ὑπὸ θύραις καὶ μοχλοῖς καὶ νοτίδος ἀπηλλαγμένον, ἀθρόον ὑπὸ τοῦ γηπόνου ἐκφερόμενον, σκορπιζόμενον, ῥιπτούμενον καὶ ἐπὶ τῆς ἀρούρας κείμενον τοῖς παριοῦσιν ἅπασι καὶ οὐ μόνον οὐκ ἀπηλλαγμένον νοτίδος, ἀλλὰ καὶ πηλῷ καὶ τέλμασι παραδιδόμενον καὶ φύλακα οὐδένα ἔχοντα, οὐκ ἂν ἀπολέσθαι τὸν σῖτον νομίσειε καὶ κατέγνω τοῦ ταῦτα ποιοῦντος γηπόνου ; 3. Ἀλλ' οὐ τῆς τοῦ πράγματος φύσεως ἡ καταγνωσις, ἀλλὰ τῆς τοῦ μὴ καλῶς κρίναντος ἀπειρίας τε καὶ ἀνοίας, ἐκ προοιμίων εὐθέως τὴν ψῆφον φέροντος. Ἐπεὶ εἰ τὸ θέρος ἀνέμεινε καὶ εἶδε τὰ λήϊα κομῶντα καὶ τὴν δρεπάνην ἠκονημένην καὶ τὸν σκορπισθέντα καὶ ἀφύλακτον μείναντα σῖτον καὶ σαπέντα καὶ διαφαρέντα καὶ τῷ πηλῷ παραδοθέντα, τοῦτον ἐγειρόμενον καὶ πολυπλασίονα γινόμενον, 4. ὡραιότερόν τε

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φαινόμενον καὶ τὴν παλαιότητα ἀποθέμενον καὶ μετὰ πολλῆς ὀρθούμενον τῆς σφοδρότητος καὶ δορυφόρους οἷον ἔχοντα καὶ φύλακας καὶ καλάμην πρὸς ὕψος ἐγείροντα καὶ τέρποντα τὸν θεατὴν καὶ τρέφοντα καὶ πολὺ παρέχοντα τὸ κέρδος, τότε ἂν ἐξεπλάγη μειζόνως, ὅτι διὰ τοιούτων ἐπὶ τοιαύτην ἦχθη εὐθηνίαν καὶ φαιδρότητα ὁ καρπός. 5. Καὶ σὺ τοίνυν, ἄνθρωπε, μάλιστα μὲν μὴ περιεργάζου τὸν κοινὸν ἁπάντων ἡμῶν Δεσπότην · εἰ δὲ οὕτω φιλόνεικος εἶ καὶ τολμηρὸς ὡς μαίνεσθαι τὴν μανίαν ταύτην, κἂν τὸ τέλος ἀνάμεινον τῶν γινομένων. Εἰ γὰρ ὁ γηπόνος ὁλόκληρον ἀναμένει χειμῶνα, οὐ πρὸς ταῦτα ἅπερ ὁ σῖτος πάσχει βλέπων κατὰ τὴν ὥραν τοῦ κρυμοῦ, ἀλλὰ πρὸς ἐκεῖνα ὧν ἀπολαύειν μέλλει · πολλῷ μᾶλλον καὶ αὐτὸς ἐπὶ τοῦ τὴν οἰκουμένην γεωργοῦντος πᾶσαν καὶ τὰς ψυχὰς τὰς ἡμετέρας, δίκαιος ἂν εἴης ἀναμένειν τὸ τέλος · ἐγὼ δὲ τέλος οὐ τὸ ἐν τῷ παρόντι βίῳ μόνον λέγω -- πολλάκις γὰρ τοῦτο καὶ ἐνταῦθα ἔσται -- ἀλλὰ καὶ τὸ ἐν τῷ μέλλοντι. Πρὸς ἓν γὰρ βλέπει τέλος ἑκατέρων τῶν βίων τούτων ἡ οἰκονομία, τὴν σωτηρίαν τὴν ἡμετέραν καὶ τὴν εὐδοκίμησιν. Εἰ γὰρ καὶ τῷ χρόνῳ διῄρηται, ἀλλὰ τῷ σκοπῷ συνῆπται · καὶ ὥσπερ νῦν μὲν χειμών, νῦν δὲ ἔαρ, ἑκατέρα δὲ τοῦ ἔτους ἡ ροπὴ πρὸς ἓν βλέπει, τῶν καρπῶν τὴν ἀκμήν, οὕτω δὴ καὶ ἐπὶ τῶν ἡμετέρων πραγμάτων.

6. Ὅταν οὖν ἴδῃς τὴν Ἐκκλησίαν σκορπισθεῖσαν, τὰ ἔσχατα παθοῦσαν, ἐλαυνομένους, μαστιζομένους τοὺς ἐν αὐτῇ λάμποντας, τὸν πρόεδρον αὐτῆς πορρωτάτω ἐπενεχθέντα, μὴ ταῦτα σκόπει μόνον, ἀλλὰ καὶ τὰ ἐκ τούτων ἐκβησόμενα, τοὺς

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μισθοὺς, τὰς ἀμοιβάς, τὰ βραβεῖα, τὰ ἔπαθλα · " Ὁ γὰρ ὑπομείνας εἰς τέλος, οὗτος σωθήσεται", φησίν. Ἐπὶ μὲν γὰρ τῆς Παλαιᾶς, ἐπειδὴ οὐδέπω γνώριμος ὁ τῆς ἀβασταάσεως λόγος ἦν, ἐν τῷ παρόντι βίῳ ἀμφότερα ἐγίνετο · ἐπὶ δὲ τῆς Καινῆς οὐ πανταχοῦ τοῦτο, ἀλλ᾽ ἔστιν ὅπου τὰ μὲν λυπηρὰ ἐνταῦθα, τὰ δὲ χρηστὰ ἀναμένει τὴν ἐντεῦθεν ἡμῶν ἀποδημίαν.

7. Ἀλλ᾽ ὅμως εἰ καὶ ἐν τῷδε τῷ βίῳ τὰ χρηστὰ αὐτοῖς ἐξέβαινε καὶ ἐν τῇ παρούσῃ ζωῇ καὶ ἐν τούτῳ μάλιστα θαυμαστοὶ ἂν εἶεν οἱ τούτων μὴ ἀπολελαυκότες, ὅτι μήτε τὸν περὶ ἀναστάσεως σαφῶς εἰδότες λόγον καὶ τὰ ἐναντία τῶν ἐπαγγελιῶν τοῦ θεοῦ συμβαίνοντα ὁρῶντες ἐπὶ τῶν πραγμάτων, οὐκ ἐσκανδαλίζοντο, οὐκ ἐθορυβοῦντο, οὐδὲ ἐταράττοντο, αλλα παρεχώρουν αὐτοῦ τῇ ἀκαταλήπτῳ προνοίᾳ, οὐδὲν ἐκ τῶν ἐναντίως γινομένων σκανδαλιζόμενοι, ἀλλ᾽ εἰδότες αὐτοῦ τὸ εὔπορον καὶ εὐμήχανον τῆς σοφίας, τὸ τέλος ἀνέμενον, μᾶλλον δὲ καὶ πρὸ τοῦ τέλους πᾶν ὅπερ εἰς αὐτοὺς ἐτολμᾶτο, ἔφερον εὐχαρίστως καὶ τὸν συγχωροῦντα ταῦτα γίνεσθαι θεὸν δοξάζοντες διετέλουν. Τάχα ἀσαφὴς ὁ λόγος οὗτος ὑμῖν εἶναι δοκεῖ · οὐκοῦν σαφέστερον αὐτὸν ποιῆσαι πειράσομαι.

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Chapter Nine

It is not necessary to curiously inquire into the meaning of events. Rather, we should await their final outcome.

1. Above all, one should not inquire too inquisitively, neither at the beginning of events nor at their conclusion. But if you are so curious and unduly inquisitive, wait for the final outcome and consider how things will turn out. Don't be troubled or disturbed at the outset. For example, if an inexperienced person sees a goldsmith at the beginning melting down the gold and mixing it with ashes and chaff, he will believe the gold has been destroyed if he doesn't wait for the process to be completed. If someone born and raised on the sea was suddenly transported into the heart of the country and had never heard anything about how one cultivates the land, 2. what would he think when he saw the wheat which had been stored away, preserved and separated from the damp behind doors and bars, suddenly brought out by the farmer, scattered and cast into the wind, lying on the groundin the sight of all who passed by, not only no longer protected from moisture, but suddenly delivered over to mud and mortar without any protection -- wouldn't he think the wheat was soon to be destroyed? Wouldn't he pass judgment on the farmer for treating it this way? 3. Now his condemnation of the farmer does not arise

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from the nature of what had been done, but rather from the inexperience and folly of the one who was not judging well, immediately expressing at the outset a premature opinion. Since if he would wait for the summer and see the crops blooming, the sickle sharpened and the wheat which remained scattered, unprotected, rotted, ruined, and delivered up to the muddy earth, now raised up and multiplied many times over, 4. appearing in full bloom, having put off the old husk, restored with great vigor, as though possessing body guards and guardians, raising its stalk in the air, delighting, nourishing, and rendering great benefit to the observer -- he would be greatly amazed that through such difficult circumstances the fruit had been brought to such an appearance and lustre. 5. Accordingly, Friend, above all stop meddling in the affairs of our common Master of all things. But if you are so contentious and bold as to act in such an insane fashion, wait for the outcome of events. Indeed, if the farmer waits all winter, not focusing his attention on what the wheat suffers during the season of cold, but rather on those things he is about to obtain, how much more should you yourself be bound to await the outcome before the one who cultivates the entire world and our own souls. I am not only speaking of the outcome of events in this present life -- for often the outcome will be here -- but also of the fulfillment of things in the life to come. That is to say, the plan of God has reference to the single

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outcome of each of these two lives, our salvation and our glory. If it is divided in two by time, it is united by the final objective. And just as it is sometimes winter and sometimes spring, the changing of the seasons has only one goal -- the blooming of the fruit -- so it is with those matters which concern us. Therefore, when you see the Church scattered, suffering the most terrible trials, her most illustrious members persecuted and flogged, her leader carried away into exile, don't only consider these events, but also the things which have resulted: the rewards, the recompense, the awards for the athlete who wins in the games and the prizes won in the contest. "For the one who endures to the end will be saved," says the Scripture.[1] In the Old Testament, since the teaching concerning the resurrection was not yet well known, both aspects came to pass in the present life. In the New Testament, however, this is not always the case; there are places where painful things occur in this life and good things await our departure from here. 7. Nevertheless, if the good things of life were coming to pass for Old Testament believers in this present life, they are to be especially admired who did not enjoy these good things; without clearly understanding the teaching concerning the resurrection and seeing things come to pass which were clearly contrary to the promises of God, they

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[1] Matthew 10: 22

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were not shocked, thrown into confusion, nor disturbed. Instead, they continually gave themselves up to his incomprehensible providence and were not offended by the events which were occurring against them, recognizing the richness and resourcefulness of his wisdom. They were waiting for the final outcome, bearing gratefully everything he dared to do against them before the final goal was reached and continuing to glorify God, even though he allowed such things to take place. Perhaps this statement appears obscure to you. Therefore, I will attempt to make it more clear.

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Κεθ. ι΄. Ὅτι καὶ οἱ παλαιοὶ τὰ τέλη τῶν πραγμάτων ἀνέμενον

1. Γέροντι γενομένῳ ποτὲ τῷ Ἀβραὰμ καὶ πρὸς παιδοποιὶαν ἐκ τῆς ἡλικίας νεκρωθέντι λοιπόν -- εἰς γὰρ τὸ γενέσθαι πατὴρ οὐδὲν ἄμεινον τῶν τετελευτηκότων διέκειτο ζῶν -- γέροντι τοίνυν ὄντι τῷ δικαίῳ καὶ τῆς φυσικῆς παιδοποιίας ὑπερβάντι τοὺς ὅρους ἐκ πολλοῦ τοῦ περιόντος, ἔχοντι δὲ καὶ σύνοικον πέτρας ἀγονωτέραν τὴν Σάρραν, ἐπαγγέλλεται πατέρα ποιήσειν ὁ θεος τοσούτων ἐκγόνων αὐτὸν ὡς παρισοῦσθαι αὐτῶν τὸ πλῆθος τῷ πλήθει τῶν ἄστρων. 2. Ὁ δὲ, τοιούτων κωλυμάτων ὄντων, τῆς ἡλικίας ἤδη εἰς ἔσχατον γῆρας κατενεχθείσης καὶ τῆς γυναικὸς ἀπό τε τῆς ἡλικίας, ἀπό τε τῆς φύσεως πεπηρωμένης · οὐ γάρ τὸ γῆρας διεκώλυε μόνον, ἀλλὰ καὶ αὐτῆς τῆς φύσεως ἡ πήρωσις · καὶ γὰρ καὶ νέας οὔσης ἄχρηστον τὸ τῆς φύσεως ἐργαστήριον ἦν · στεῖρα γὰρ ἦν ἡ γυνή.
3. Διὸ καὶ Παῦλος ἐπισημαινόμενος τοῦτο αὐτό, οὕτως ἔλεγε · "Καὶ τὴν νέκρωσιν τῆς μήτρας Σάρρας". Οὐκ εἶπε τὴν νέκρωσιν Σάρρας ἁπλῶς, ἵνα μὴ τὴν ἡλικίαν ὑποπτεύσῃς μόνον, αλλα καὶ αὐτῆς μήτρας τὴν νέκρωσιν, τὴν οὐκ ἀπὸ χρόνων μόνον, αλλα καὶ ἀπὸ φύσεως γεγενημένην · ἀλλ ὅμως καὶ τηλικούτων, οἵπερ ἔφην, κωλυμάτων ὄντων, εἰδὼς τί ποτέ ἐστιν ἐπαγγελία θεοῦ, πῶς εὐμήχανός τε καὶ εὔπορος καὶ οὐ νόμοις φύσεως, οὐ δυσχολίᾳ πραγμάτων, οὐκ ἄλλῳ τινὶ κωλυομένη, ἀλλὰ δια τῶν ἐναντίων βαδίζουσα καὶ τὸ ἐπηγγελμένον εἰς ἔργον ἄγουσα,
4. κατεδέξατο τὸ εἰρημένον καὶ ἐπίστευσε τῇ ὑποσχέσει καὶ τὸν θόρυβον τὸν ἐκ τῶν λογισμῶν οὐδὲ κινηθῆναι ὅλως ἀφείς,

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ἀξιόπιστον ἔκρινεν εἶναι, ὥσπερ οὖν καὶ ἐστὶ, πρὸς τὴν τῆς ἐπαγγελίας πλήρωσιν τοῦ ὑποσχομένου τὴν δύναμιν, οὐκ ἐξετάσας, πῶς καὶ τίνι τρόπῳ ταῦτα ἔσται καὶ τίνος ἕνεκεν οὐκ ἐν νεότητι, ἀλλ᾽ ἐν γήρᾳ καὶ ὀψέ ποτε καὶ βραδέως.

5. Διὸ καὶ ὁ Παῦλος αὐτὸν ἀνακηρύττει μετὰ λαμπρᾶς τῆς φωνῆς οὕτω λέγων · "Ὃς παρ᾽ ἐλπίδα ἐπ᾽ ἐλπίδι ἐπίστευσεν εἰς τὸ γενέσθαι αὐτὸν πατέρα πολλῶν ἐθνῶν." Τί ἐστι · "Παρ᾽ ἐλπίδα ἐπ᾽ ἐλπίδι" ; Παρ᾽ ἐλπίδα τὴν ἀνθρωπίνην, ἐπ᾽ ἐλπίδι τῇ τοῦ Θεοῦ, τῇ πάντα νικώσῃ, τῇ πάντα δυναμένῃ, τῇ πάντων περιγινομένῃ. Καὶ ἐπίστευσεν οὐκ εἰς τὸ πατὴρ γενέσθαι μόνον, ἀλλὰ καὶ ἐθνῶν τοσούτων, ὁ γέρων καὶ ἀγονος, ὁ στεῖραν καὶ γεγηρακυῖαν γυναῖκα ἔχων, κατὰ τὸ εἰρημένον ·

6. "Οὕτως ἔσται τὸ σπέρμα σου. Καὶ μὴ ἀσθενήσας τῇ πίστει οὐ κατενόησε τὸ ἑαυτοῦ σῶμα νενεκρωμένον, ἑκατονταέτης που ὑπάρχων καὶ τὴν νέκρωσιν τῆς μήτρας Σάρρας · εἰς δὲ τὴν ἐπαγγελίαν τοῦ Θεοῦ οὐ διεκρίθη τῇ ἀπιστίᾳ, ἀλλ᾽ ἐνεδυναμώθη τῇ πίστει, δοὺς δόξαν τῷ Θεῷ καὶ πληροφορηθεὶς ὃ ἐπήγγελται δυνατός ἐστι καὶ ποιῆσαι." Ὃ δὲ λέγει, τοιοῦτόν ἐστι · Ἀναπηδήσας καὶ ἐξαλλόμενος εὐθέως ἀπὸ τῆς ἀνθρωπίνης ἀσθενείας καὶ πρὸς τὸ ὕψος ἀναδραμὼν τοῦ ὑποσχομένου καὶ ἐννοήσας αὐτοῦ τὴν ἄφατον δύναμιν, ἐπείσθη σαφῶς ὅτι παντως ἔσται τὸ εἰρημένον.

7. Καὶ τούτῳ μάλιστα τὸν Θεὸν ἐδόξασε, τῷ μὴ περιεργάσασθαι, μηδὲ πολυπραγμονῆσαι, ἀλλὰ τῷ ἀκαταλήπτῳ τῆς σοφίας αὐτοῦ καὶ τῆς δυνάμεως παραχωρῆσαι καὶ μηδὲν ἀμφιβάλλειν ὅλως περὶ τῶν εἰρημένων. Ὁρᾷς ὅτι τοῦτο ἐστι

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μάλιστα τὸ δοξάζειν τὸν Θεόν, τὸ ἀεὶ παραχωρεῖν αὐτοῦ τῷ ἀκαταλήπτῳ τῆς προνοίας καὶ τῇ ἀρρήτῳ δυνάμει καὶ σοφίᾳ καὶ μὲ περιεργάζεσθαι, μηδὲ πολυπραγμονεῖν, μηδὲ λέγειν · Διὰ τί τοῦτο ; εἰς τί τοῦτο ; πῶς τοῦτο ἔσται ;

8. Οὐ τοῦτο δὲ μόνον ἐστὶ τὸ θαυμαστόν, ἀλλ ᾽ ὅτι καὶ τὸν υἱὸν αὐτοῦ ἐκεῖνον, τὸν μονογενῆ καὶ γνήσιον, μετὰ τὴν ὑπόσχεσιν ταύτην ἐκελεύετο καταθύειν καὶ οὐδὲ τότε ἐσκανδαλίζετο. Καίτοι πολλὰ ἦν τὰ δυνάμενα σκανδαλίσαι τὸν μὴ νήφοντα, μηδὲ ἐγρηγορότα · καὶ αὐτο πρῶτον τὸ ἐπίταγμα, εἰ ὁ Θεὸς τοιαύτας καταδέχεται θυσίας καὶ παιδοκτόνους εἶναι κελεύει τοὺς πατέρας καὶ βιαίῳ τελευτῇ καταλύειν τὸν βίον καὶ ἀώρῳ παραδιδόναι τοὺς παῖδας θανάτῳ, καὶ αὐτόχειρας γενέσθαι τῶν γεννηθέντων καὶ αἵματι τοιούτῳ τὸν βωμὸν αἱμάσσεσθαι βούλεται τὸν αὐτοῦ καὶ δεξιὰν ὁπλίζεσθαι πατρικὴν κατὰ τοῦ μονογενοῦς παιδὸς καὶ φονέων εἶναι χαλεπώτερον τὸν δίκαιον ·

9. καὶ μετὰ τούτου καὶ ἡ τῆς φύσεως τυραννὶς θορυβοῦσα, ταράττουσα, οὐκ ἐπειδὴ πατὴρ ἦν μόνον, ἀλλ ᾽ ἐπειδὴ καὶ φιλόστοργος καὶ πατὴρ τοιούτου παιδός, γνησίου, μονογενοῦς, καλοῦ μὲν ἰδεῖν, καλοῦ δὲ νοῆσαι. Καὶ γὰρ ἐν αὐτῷ τῷ ἄνθει τῆς ἡλικίας ἦν καὶ αὐτῇ τῆς ἀρετῆς τῇ ἀκμῇ, διπλῇ τότε ἀπολάμπων τῇ εὐμορφίᾳ καὶ τῇ τῆς ψυχῆς καὶ τῇ τοῦ σώματος.

10. Οὐ μικρὸν δὲ εἰς φιλοστοργίαν ἦν καὶ τὸ παρ ᾽ ἐλπίδα δοθῆναι πᾶσαν. Ἴστε γὰρ πῶς ἐπέραστα τὸ τοιαῦτα παιδία, τὰ παρ᾽ ἐλπίδα καὶ προσδοκίαν καὶ οὐ νόμῳ φύσεως κεχαρισμένα, οἷος ἐκεῖνος ἦν. Καὶ μετὰ τούτων δὴ πάντων τὸ μαλιστα

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ἱκανὸν παρασχεῖν σκάνδαλον ἡ ἐπαγγελία καὶ ἡ ὑπόσχεσις ἦν · ἐναντίον γὰρ ἦν αὐτῇ τὸ ἐπιταχθέν. Τὸ μὲν γὰρ ἐπαγγελθὲν ἦν · "Οὕτως ἔσται τὸ σπέρμα σου ὡς τὰ ἄστρα οὐρανοῦ", τὸ δὲ ἐπιτεταγμένον, τὸν υἱὸν τὸν μονογενῆ ἀφ ' οὗ πᾶσαν ἔμελλεν ἐμπλήσειν τὴν οἰκουμένην, τοῦτον ἐκ μέσου γίνεσθαι καὶ θανάτῳ παραδίδοσθαι καὶ σφαγῇ χαλεπωτάτῃ.

11. Καὶ ὁμῶς οὐδὲ οὕτως ἐσκανδαλίζετο, οὐδὲ ἐθορυβεῖτο ὁ δίκαιος ἐκεῖνος, οὐδὲ ἔπαθέ τι τοιοῦτον οἷόν εἰκὸς ἦν τινα τῶν ἀνοήτων παθεῖν καὶ δαμαὶ συρομένων. Οὐδὲ γὰρ εἶπε πρὸς ἑαυτὸν · Τί τοῦτο ; ἐπλανήθην ; παρελογίσθην ; Θεοῦ τοῦτο ἐπίταγμα ; Ἄπαγε, οὐ πείθομαι · τὸ παιδοκτόνον με γενέσθαι ἄδικον καὶ τοιούτῳ φοινίξαι αἵματι τὴν δεξιάν μου. Πῶς δὲ τὰ τῆς ἐπαγγελίας ἕξει πέρας ; Ἂν γὰρ ἀνέλω τὴν ῥίζαν, πόθεν οἱ κλάδοι ; πόθεν οἱ καρποί ; ἂν καταχώσω τὴν πηγήν, πόθεν οἱ ποταμοί ; ἂν σφάξω τὸν υἱόν, πόθεν μοι τὸ πλῆθος τῶν ἐκγόνων τὸ τῷ πλήθει τῶν ἄστρων παρισούμενον ;

12. Πῶς οὖν ὑπέσχετο ἕτερα καὶ ἐναντία ἐπιτάττει νῦν ; Τούτων οὐδὲν οὐκ εἶπεν, οὐκ ἐνενόησεν · ἀλλὰ πάλιν ἐπὶ τὴν δύναμιν τοῦ ἐπαγγειλαμένου καταφυγὼν τὴν ἄφατον, τὴν εὐμήχανον, τὴν εὔπορον, τὴν διὰ τῶν ἐναντίων διαλάμπουσαν, τὴν ἀνωτέραν τῶν τῆς φύσεως νόμων, τὴν πάντων δυνατωτέραν, τὴν οὐδὲν τῆς φύσεως νόμων, τὴν πάντων δυνατωτέραν, τὴν οὐδὲν ἔχουσαν τὸ ἀντιπῖπτον καὶ τοῦτο μετὰ πολλῆς τῆς πληροφορίας τὸ ἐπίταγμα ἤνυε καὶ ἔσφαξε τὸν υἱὸν καὶ ἥμαξε τὴν δεξιὰν καὶ ἐφοίνιξε τὸ ξίφος καὶ διὰ τῆς δειρῆς τὴν μάχαιραν ἤλασεν · εἰ γὰρ καὶ μὴ τῷ ἔργῳ, ἀλλὰ τῇ γνώμῃ

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ταῦτα πάντα ἐπλήρωσε.

13. Διὸ καὶ Μωυσῆς αὐτὸν θαυμάζων, οὕτως ἔφη · "Καὶ ἐγένετο μετὰ τὰ ῥήματα ταῦτα, ὁ θεὸς ἐπείραξε τὸν Ἀβραὰμ καὶ εἶπεν αὐτῷ · Λαβὲ τὸν υἱόν σου τὸν ἀγαπητὸν ὃν ἠγάπησας τὸν Ἰσαὰκ καὶ ἀνένεγκε αὐτὸν ἐφ ' ἓν τῶν ὀρέων ὧν ἄν σοι εἴπω." Ταῦτα τὰ τῆς ὑποσχέσεως ῥήματα, τὰ τῆς ἐπαγγελιάς, τὰ λέγοντα ὅτι πλήθους ἐκγόνων ἔσται πατὴρ καὶ ἔσται τὸ σπέρμα αὐτοῦ ὡς τὰ ἄστρα τοῦ οὐρανοῦ ;

14. Ὅρα πῶς μετὰ τὰ ῥήματα ταῦτα, ἀκούσας σφάξαι τὸν υἱόν, κατεδέξατο τὸν ἀφ ' οὗ τοσοῦτον ἔμελλεν ἔσεσθαι τὸ πλῆθος, τοῦτον ἀνελεῖν καὶ καταθῦσαι καὶ ἐκ μέσου ποιῆσαι καὶ ἱερεῖον τῷ θεῷ προσαγαγεῖν. Καὶ ὁ Παῦλος δὲ αὐτὸν θαυμαζων πάλιν οὕτως ἀνεκήρυττε λέγων · "Πίστει προσενήνοχεν Ἀβραὰμ τὸν Ἰσαὰκ πειραζόμενος." Εἶτα δεικνὺς ἡλίκον πρᾶγμα ἐποίησε καὶ ὅσην ἐπεδείξατο πίστιν, ἐπήγαγε · "Καὶ τὸν μονογενῆ προσέφερεν ὁ τὰς ἐπαγγελίας δεξάμενος." 15. Ὃ δὲ λέγει, τοιοῦτόν ἐστιν · Οὐκ ἔστιν εἰπεῖν ὅτι δύο παιδας εἶχε γνησίους καὶ προσεδόκα, ἀναιρεθέντος τούτου, ἀπὸ τοῦ ἑτέρου τοῦ πλήθους ἐκείνου ἔσεσθαι πατήρ, ἀλλὰ καὶ μόνον εἶχεν αὐτὸν καὶ ἀπὸ μόνου τούτου τὰ τῆς ἐπαγγελιάς ἤρτητο · καὶ ὅμως τοῦτον εἵλετο καταθῦσαι, ὥσπερ ἐν τῇ ὑποσχέσει τῆς γεννήσεως αὐτοῦ μήτε τῇ οἰκείᾳ νεκρώσει, μήτε τῇ πηρώσει τῆς φύσεως τῆς γυναικὸς κωλυθεὶς πρὸς τὴν πίστιν, οὕτως οὐδὲ ἐνταῦθα τῷ θανάτῳ παρεμποδισθείς.

16. Παράβαλε τοίνυν ταῦτα πρὸς τὰ νῦν γεγενημένα καὶ ὄψει σου τὴν μικροψυχίαν καὶ ὄψει τὴν εὐτέλειαν τῶν

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σκανδαλιζομένων καὶ μαθήσῃ σαφῶς ὅτι οὐδαμόθεν ἑτέρωθέν σοι τὸ σκάνδαλον γίνεται ἢ ἐκ τοῦ μὴ παραχωρεῖν τῇ ἀκαταλήπτῳ τοῦ θεοῦ προνοίᾳ, ἀλλ᾽ ἐπιζητεῖν οἰκονομιῶν τρόπον πανταχοῦ καὶ αἰτίας τῶν γινομένων ἀπαιτεῖν καὶ ἕκαστα περιεργάζεσθαι.
17. Ὅπερ εἰ ἔπαθεν ὁ Ἀβραάμ, ἔμελλε πρὸς τὴν πίστιν χωλεύειν. Ἀλλ᾽ οὐ περιεργάσατο, διὸ καὶ ἔλαμψε καὶ πάντων ἐπέτυχε τῶν ἐπηγγελμένων· οὐδὲ ἐσκανδαλίζετο, οὐδὲ τῷ γήρᾳ, οὐδὲ τῷ μετὰ ταῦτα ἐπιτάγματι· οὐδὲ ἐνόμισε κωλυμα εἶναι τὸ ἐπίταγμα τῇ ὑποσχέσει, οὔτε ἀναιρετικὴν εἶναι τὴν θυσίαν τῆς ἐπαγγελίας, οὐδὲ εἰς ἀπόγνωσιν ἐνέπιπτε τῆς ὑποσχέσεως, καίτοι πρὸς αὐτὸ τὸ πέρας τῶν πραγμάτων ἐλθών. Μὴ γάρ μοι τοῦτο λέγε ὅτι οὐκ εἴασεν ὁ θεὸς εἰς ἔργον τὸ ἐπίταγμα ἐλθεῖν, οὐδὲ αἱμαχθῆναι τοῦ δικαίου τὴν δεξιάν· ἀλλ᾽ ἐκεῖνο σκόπει ὅτι τούτων οὐδὲν ὁ Ἀβραάμ ᾔδει, οὐδὲ ὅτι ζῶντα ἀπολήψεται τὸν υἱὸν καὶ οὕτως οἷόν τε ἐπιστρέψαι ἠπίστατο, ἀλλ᾽ ἔτεινεν ὅλην πρὸς τὴν σφαγὴν τὴν ἑαυτοῦ γνώμην. 18. Διὰ τοῦτο καὶ ἐκ δευτέρου καλεῖται ἐκ τῶν οὐρανῶν. Οὐ γὰρ εἶπεν αὐτῷ "Ἀβραάμ" ἁπλῶς, ἀλλα᾽ "Ἀβραάμ, Ἀβραάμ", τῷ διπλασιασμῷ τῆς φωνῆς τὴν ἐπιτεταμένην πρὸς τὴν θυσίαν προαίρεσιν ἀνείργων τε καὶ ἀναχαιτίζων· οὕτως ὅλος τοῦ ἐπιτάγματος ἦν. Εἶδες πῶς τὸ πᾶν τῇ γνώμῃ αὐτοῦ ἐπεπλήρωτο καὶ σκάνδαλον οὐδαμοῦ. Τὸ δὲ αἴτιον, τὸ μὴ περιεργάζεσθαι τὰ τοῦ θεοῦ.
19. Τί δὲ ὁ Ἰωσήφ; εἰπέ μοι. Οὐ τοιοῦτόν τι καὶ αὐτὸς πέπονθε; Καὶ γὰρ κἀκείνῳ μεγάλη τῆς ὑποσχέσεως χάρις ἦν παρὰ τοῦ θεοῦ δεδομένη καὶ τὰ γινόμενα πάλιν ἀπεναντίας τῶν

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ἐπαγγελλιῶν ἐγίνετο. Ἡ μὲν γὰρ ὑπόσχεσις ἦν διὰ τῶν ὀνειράτων προσκυνήσειν αὐτὸν τοὺς ἀδελφοὺς καὶ διπλῆ οἴψις τοῦτο ἀνεκήρυττεν, ἥ τε διὰ τῶν ἄστρων, ἥ τε διὰ τῶν δραγμάτων · τὰ δὲ μετὰ τὰς ὁράσεις ταύτας συμβαίνοντα ἐναντία τῶν ὄψεων ἦν.

20. Πρῶτον μὲν γὰρ πόλεμος αὐτῷ χαλεπὸς ἐντεῦθεν κατὰ τὴν πατρῴαν οἰκίαν ἀνερριπίζετο καὶ οἱ τὰς αὐτὰς αὐτῷ λυσάντες ὠδῖνας, διατεμόντες τῆς συγγενείας τοὺς νόμους καὶ διαρρήξαντες τῆς ἀδελφικῆς φιλίας αὐτῆς τὸ δεσμὰ καὶ αὐτοὺς τῆς φύσεως διασαλεύσαντες τοὺς θεσμοὺς, ἐχθροὶ καὶ πολέμιοι καὶ λύκων ἀγριώτεροι περὶ τὸν ἀδελφὸν ἀπὸ τῶν ὀνειράτων ἐκείνων ἐγίνοντο · καὶ ὥσπερ θῆρες ἄγριοι καὶ ἀνήμεροί τινες ἀρνίον ἐν μέσῳ λαβόντες, οὕτω καθ᾽ ἑκάστην ἐπεβουλευον αὐτῷ τὴν ἡμέραν. 21. Καὶ πατὴρ τοῦ πολέμου τούτου φθόνος ἦν ἄλογος καὶ βασκανία ἄδικος · καὶ τῷ θυμῷ ζέοντες, φόνου καθ᾽ ἑκάστην ἔπνεον τὴν ἡμέραν, τοῦ φθόνου τὴν καμίνον ταύτην ἀνάπτοντος καὶ τὴν πυρὰν ἐγείροντος. Καὶ ἐπειδὴ τεώς αὐτὸν οὐδὲν ἐργάσασθαι ἠδύναντο χαλεπόν, ἔνδον στρεφόμενον καὶ μετὰ τῶν γονέων διατρίβοντα, διαβάλλουσιν αὐτοῦ τὴν ὑπόληψιν καὶ αἰσχρὰν κατασκευάζουσιν αὐτῷ δόξαν καὶ ψόγον καταφέρουσι πονηρόν, τοῦ πατρὸς τὸ φίλτρον ταύτῃ καταλῦσαι βουλόμενοι καὶ πρὸς ἐπιβουλὴν εὐχείρωτον λαβεῖν.

22. Εἶτα μετὰ ταῦτα λαβόντες αὐτὸν ἔξω τῶν πατρικῶν ὀφθαλμῶν καὶ ἐπ᾽ ἐρημίας εὑρόντες αὐτοῖς κομιζοντα τροφὴν καὶ εἰς ἐπίσκεψιν αὐτῶν ἀφιγμένον, οὐ τὴν αἰτίαν τῆς ἀφιξεως ᾐδέσθησαν, οὐ τὴν τράπεζαν ᾐσχύνθησαν τὴν ἀδελφικήν, ἀλλα τα

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ξίφη ἠκόνουν καὶ πρὸς σφαγὴν ηὐτρεπίζοντο καὶ ἀδελφοκτόνοι πάντες ἐγίνοντο, οὐ μικρόν, οὐ μέγα ἐγκαλεῖν ἔχοντες τῷ μέλλοντι ἀναιρεῖσθαι παρ' αὐτῶν · ἀλλ' ὑπὲρ ὧν αὐτὸν στεφανοῦσθαι καὶ ἀνακηρύττεσθαι ἔδει, φθονοῦντες, πολεμοῦντες, διαβάλλοντες. 23. Ἀλλ' ἐκεῖνος οὐδὲ οὕτως ἀπεστρέφετο αὐτῶν τὴν συνουσίαν, ἀλλὰ καὶ ἐν τοσαύτῃ πονηρίᾳ τὴν ἀδελφικὴν ἐπεδείκνυτο διάθεσιν · οἱ δὲ καὶ οὕτως αὐτὸν ἀνελεῖν ἐπεχείρουν καὶ ἀνεῖλον, τὸ γε αὐτῶν μέρος καὶ ταὶς δεξιὰς ἥμαξαν καὶ τὴν ἀδελφοκτονίαν ἀπήρτισαν.

24. Ἀλλ' ἡ εὐμήχανος καὶ ἐν τοῖς ἀπόροις εὔπορος τοῦ Θεοῦ σοφία καὶ ἐν αὐτῷ τῷ βαράθρῳ καὶ ἐν αὐτῇ τοῦ θανάτου τῇ ἐπαγωγῇ, ἐκ τῶν μιαρῶν αὐτῶν ἐκεῖνον ἐξήρπασε χειρῶν. Συνεβούλευσε μὲν γὰρ τῶν ἀδελφῶν εἷς, ὥστε ἀποστῆναι τῆς μιαιφονίας ἐκείνης · ἔπεισε δὲ ὁ θεὸς καὶ τὴν σφαγὴν διεκώλυσεν. Οὐ μὴν οὐδὲ ἐνταῦθα ἵστατο τὰ δεινά, αλλα περαιτέρω προῄει πάλιν. Ἐπειδὴ γὰρ αὐτὸν ἐκωλύθησαν ἀνελεῖν, ἔζεε δὲ ὁ θυμὸς αὐτῶν ἔτι καὶ τὰ τῆς ὀργῆς ἠκμαζε καὶ πολὺ τὸ κλυδώνιον τοῦ πάθους ἦν, εἰς ἕτερόν τι τὴν ὀργὴν μετήνεγκαν. 25. Ἀποδύσαντες γὰρ καὶ δήσαντες αὐτον καὶ εἷς λάκκον ῥίψαντες οἱ ὠμοὶ καὶ ἀπάνθρωποι καὶ θηριώδεις, οὕτω τῆς παρ' αὐτοῦ κομισθείσης τραπέζης ἀπήλαυον · καὶ ὁ μὲν ἦν ἐν λάκκῳ περὶ τῶν ἐσχάτων δεδοικώς, οἱ δὲ ἐτρύφων καὶ ἐμέθυον. Καὶ οὐδὲ ἐνταῦθα ἵσταντο τῆς μανίας, αλλ' ἰδόντες ἀνθρώπους βαρβάρους καὶ πόρρω τῆς αὐτῶν ἀπῳκισμένους χώρας εἰς τὴν Αἴγυπτον κατιόντας, λαβόντες ἀπέδοντο τὸν ἀδελφόν, ἕτερον θάνατον ἐντεῦθεν αὐτῷ κατασκευάζοντες, μακρότερόν

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τινα καὶ χαλεπώτερον καὶ πολλῆς γέμοντα ταλαιπωρίας.
26. Μειράκιον γὰρ ὢν καὶ μειράκιον κομιδῆ καὶ μετὰ πολλῆς τῆς ἐλευθερίας ἐν οἰκίᾳ πατρῴᾳ τραφεὶς καὶ δουλείας ἁπάσης ἄμοιρος ὢν καὶ τῆς ἐν δουλείᾳ ταλαιπωρίας, ἐννόησον τί ποτε ἔπασχεν, ἀθρόον δοῦλος ἀντ' ἐλευθέρου καὶ ξένος ἀντὶ πολίτου γενόμενος καὶ τὴν ἐσχάτην αἰχμαλωσίαν ὑπομένων · οὐχὶ δουλείαν μόνον, ἀλλὰ καὶ πατρὸς καὶ μητρὸς καὶ τῶν αὐτῷ προσηκόντων ἁπάντων ἀπορρηγνύμενος, γυμνός, ξένος, ἄοικος, ἄπολις, νόμῳ δουλείας βαρβαρικαῖς χερσὶν ἐκδεδομένος.
27. Τί γὰρ οὐκ ἦν αὐτὸν ἱκανὸν θορυβῆσαι ; τὸ ἀθρόον, τὸ ἀπροσδόκητον, τὸ παρ' ἐλπίδα ἀμελέτητον, τὸ χαλεπὸν τῆς συμφορᾶς, τὸ παρ' αδελφῶν καὶ ἀδελφῶν ἀγαπωμένων, μὴ μικρόν, μὴ μέγα ἐκείνους ἠδικηκότα, μᾶλλον δὲ καὶ εὐεργετηκότα, ταῦτα παθεῖν ; Καὶ ὅμως οὐδενὶ τούτων διεταράττετο, ἀλλ' ἀπήγετο διὰ τῶν ἐμπόρων ἐκείνων εἰς Αἴγυπτον, δουλείαν ἐκ δουλείας ἀμείβων. 28. Καὶ γὰρ καὶ ἐκεῖ πάλιν ἐγίνετο δοῦλος καὶ ᾤκει βαρβαρικὴν οἰκίαν ὁ Ἑβραῖος, ὁ εὐγενής, ὁ διπλῆν ἐλευθερίαν ἐλεύθερος καὶ τῆν τοῦ σώματος καὶ τὴν τῆς ψυχῆς · καὶ οὐδὲ ἐντεῦθεν ἐταράττετο, οὐδὲ ἐσκανδαλιζετο πρὸς τὰ γεγενημένα, τῶν ὄψεων ἀναμιμνησκόμενος τῶν τὰ ἐναντία ἐπαγγελλομένων, οὐδὲ περιειργάζετο, τί δήποτε ταῦτα γίνεται ; 29. Καὶ οἱ μὲν ἀδελφοκτόνοι καὶ λύκοι καὶ θῆρες καίτοι ταῦτα ἠδικηκότες, ἐπὶ τῆς πατρῴας οἰκίας τρυφῶσιν. αὐτὸς δὲ ὁ προσδοκηθεὶς αὐτῶν βασιλεύς, αἰχμάλωτος, δοῦλος, εἰς ἀλλοτρίαν ἀπεμποληθείς, τὴν ἐσχάτην ὑπομένει ταλαιπωρίαν, οὐ μόνον αὐτῶν οὐ βασιλεύσας, ἀλλὰ καὶ δοῦλος

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αὐτῶν γενόμενος καὶ ἐκ πολλοῦ τοῦ διαμέτρου ταὐναντία ταῖς ὑποσχέσεσι παθών. Οὐ γὰρ δὴ μόνον βασιλείας τότε οὐκ ἐπέτυχεν, ἀλλὰ καὶ πατρίδος καὶ ἐλευθερίας καὶ τῆς τῶν γονέων ἐξέπεσεν ὄψεως.

30. Καὶ οὐδὲ ἐνταῦθα αὐτῷ τὸ τῶν ἀγώνων ἱστατο, ἀλλ ᾽ἕτερον βαθύτερον ἀνωρύττετο βάραθρον, θάνατον πάλιν ἔχον καὶ σφαγήν, θάνατον ἐπονείδιστον καὶ σφαγὴν αἰσχύνης γέμουσαν. ᾽Ιδοῦσα γάρ αὐτὸν ἀδίκοις ὀφθαλμοῖς ἡ κεκτημένη καὶ ἁλοῦσα τῷ κάλλει τοῦ νεανίσκου, ὑπὸ τῆς λαμπρᾶς αὐτοῦ χειρωθεῖσα ὄψεως καὶ αὐτὴ πάλιν δόλους ἔρραπτε καὶ ἐπιβουλάς. 31. Καὶ τὰ δίκτυα τῆς ἀκολασίας πάντοθεν ἁπλώσασα, καθ ᾽ἑκάστην παρετήρει τὴν ἡμέραν εἴσω τῆς μοιχείας ἐμβαλεῖν βάραθρον καὶ θανάτῳ παραδοῦναι ἀθανάτῳ. Καὶ καθ ᾽ἑκάστην ἡμέραν ἐπὶ τὴν ἄγραν ἐξῄει ταύτην, ὑπὸ τοῦ πάθους κεντουμένη καὶ ὑπὸ τοῦ ἀκολάστου τούτου ἔρωτος. Καί ποτε εὑροῦσα μόνον, ἐπὶ τὴν ἄδικον αὐτὸν πρὸς βίαν εἵλκεν εὐνὴν καὶ τὸν ἀλλότριον διορύξαι γάμον ἠνάγκαζε καὶ τὴν σωφροσύνην αὐτοῦ λυμήνασθαι ἐπεχείρει. 32. ᾽Αλλ ᾽ὅμως οὐδὲ ἐντεῦθεν ἔπαθέ τι χαλεπὸν ὁ δίκαιος ἐκεῖνος· ἀλλὰ καὶ ἐπιθυμίας τυραννίδα καὶ νέας ἡλικίας θορύβους καὶ ἀκολάστου γυναικὸς ἐπιβουλὴν καὶ δεσποίνης ἐφόδους καὶ νεότητος ταραχὰς καὶ πάντα ὅσα εἰκὸς ἐκ τῆς ἀφῆς ἐκείνης γενέσθαι καὶ τῆς ὄψεως καὶ τῆς μανιάς, μετὰ πολλῆς τῆς εὐκολίας ὑπερβάς, ὥσπερ τῆς ἀετὸς ὑψηλὸν τείνας τὸ πτερὸν καὶ αὐτὰ ἀποδυσάμενος τὰ ἱματιῶν μὲν γυμνός, λαμπρὰν δὲ τῆς σωφροσύνης ἔχων τὴν περιβολὴν καὶ τῆς ἁλουργίδος αὐτῆς περιφανεστέραν.

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33. Ἐντεῦθεν αὐτῷ ξίφος ἠκονᾶτο πάλιν καὶ θάνατος ἐμελετᾶτο καὶ τὰ κύματα ἐπὶ τὸ μεῖζον ᾖρετο καὶ ἡ μανιὰ τῆς γυναικὸς τῆς βαβυλωνίας καμίνου σφοδρότερον ἀνήπτετο. Ἥ τε γὰρ ἐπιθυμία λοιπὸν ἐπὶ μεῖζον ἠγείρετο, σ᾽ τε θυμός, ἕτερον χαλεπώτατον πάθος, μετὰ πολλῆς προσετίθετο τῆς ἀγριότητος καὶ φόνον ἔβλεπε καὶ ἐπὶ ξίφος ἔτρεχε καὶ σφαγῆς ἦρα παρανομωτάτης καὶ τὸν τῆς σωφροσύνης ἀθλητὴν καὶ τὴν τῆς καρτερίας καὶ ὑπομονῆς ἀγωνιστὴν ἀνελεῖν ἔσπευδε. 34. Καὶ εἰσπηδήσασα πρὸς τὸν ἄνδρα τὸν ἑαυτῆς, ἀπαγγείλασα αὐτῷ τὰ γεγενημένα, οὐχ ὡς ἡ τοῦ πράγματος εἶχεν ἀλήθεια, ἀλλ᾽ ὡς αὐτὴ τὸ δρᾶμα τῆς συκοφαντίας κατεσκεύασεν, ἔπεισεν ἅπερ ἤθελε τὸν δικαστήν, ἐρημίαν κατηγοροῦσα καὶ ὡς ἠδικημένη τὴν ἐκδικίαν ἐπεζήτει εἰς ἀπόδειξιν ὧν ἔλεγε τὰ ἱμάτια τοῦ ἀθώου νεανίσκου περιφέρουσα ταῖς ἀκαθάρτοις χερσὶν ἐκείναις.

35. Καὶ ὁ διεφθαρμένος δικαστὴς οὐκ εἰς δικαστήριον εἰσήγαγε τὸν κατηγορούμενον, οὐ λόγου μετέδωκεν, ἀλλὰ τὸν οὐδὲ ἑωρακότα δικαστήριον, ὡς ἑαλωκότα, ὡς ἐληλεγμένον καὶ μοιχὸν ἀπηρτισμένον κατεδίκασε καὶ εἰς δεσμωτήριον ἐνέβαλε καὶ ἀλύσει παρέδωκε. Καὶ ἦν λοιπὸν ὁ τοσούτους στεφάνους ἀναδησάμενος ἀρετῆς, μετὰ γοήτων, μετὰ τυμβωρύχων, μετὰ ἀνδροφόνων, μετὰ τῶν τὰ ἔσχατα τετολμηκότων, ἐν τῷ δεσμωτηρίῳ.

36. Ἀλλ᾽ ὅμως οὐδὲν αὐτὸν τούτων ἐθορύβει. Καὶ ἕτερος μὲν τῷ βασιλεῖ προσκεκρουκὼς ἠφίετο, αὐτὸς δὲ μακρὸν ἔνδον ἔμενε χρόνον, ὑπὲρ ὧν αὐτὸν στεφανοῦσθαι καὶ ἀνακηρύττεσθαι ἔδει, τὴν ἐσχάτην τίνων τιμωρίαν. Καὶ οὐδὲ οὕτως ἐταράττετο, οὐδὲ

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ἐσκανδαλίζετο, οὐδὲ εἶπε · "Τί τοῦτο ; εἰς τί τοῦτο ; ὁ μέλλων ἐγὼ τῶν ἀδελφῶν βασιλεύειν, οὐ μόνον ταύτης ἐξέπεσον τῆς τιμῆς, ἀλλὰ καὶ πατρίδος καὶ οἰκίας καὶ γονέων καὶ παρ' αὐτῶν τῶν μελλόντων με προσκυνεῖν ἀνῃρέθην. 37. Εἶτα μετὰ τὴν σφαγὴν ἐπράθην, δοῦλος ἐγενόμην βαρβάρων καὶ συνεχεῖς ἤμειψα δεσπότας · καὶ οὐδὲ ἐνταῦθα ἔστη μοι τὰ δεινά, αλλα πανταχοῦ βάραθρα καὶ σκόπελοι. Μετὰ γὰρ τὴν ἐπιβουλὴν τῶν ἀδελφῶν καὶ τὴν σφαγὴν καὶ τὴν δουλείαν καὶ τὴν προτέραν καὶ τὴν δευτέραν, πάλιν μοι θάνατος ἐμελετήθη καὶ συκοφαντία τῆς προτέρας χαλεπωτέρα καὶ ἐπιβουλὴ καὶ ἔφοδος καὶ δικαστήριον διεφθαρμένον καὶ κατηγορία αἰσχύνην ἔχουσα πολλὴν καὶ σφαγὴν ἡμῖν ὠδίνουσα. 38. Καὶ οὔτε λόγου μεταλαβών, ἁπλῶς καὶ ὡς ἔτυχεν εἰς δεσμωτήριον ἀπηνέχθην καὶ ἁλύσεσι περίκειμαι μετὰ μοιχῶν καὶ ἀνδροφόνων καὶ τῶν τὰ ἔσχατα τετολμηκότων. Καὶ ὁ μὲν ἀρχιοινοχόος ἀπηλλάγη καὶ ἁλύσεως καὶ δεσμωτηρίου · ἐγὼ δὲ οὐδὲ μετ' ἐκεῖνον ἀδείας τινὸς ἀπολαῦσαι δεδύνημαι · κἀκείνῳ μὲν εἰς ἔργον ἐξέβη τὸ ὄναρ κατὰ τὴν ἑρμηνείαν τὴν ἐμήν · ἐγὼ δὲ ἐν τοῖς ἀνηκέστοις εἰμὶ κακοῖς. 39. Ταῦτα αἱ ὄψεις προεδήλουν ἐκεῖναι ; ταῦτα τῶν ἀστέρων ὁ ἀριθμός ; ταῦτα τὰ δράγματα; Ποῦ τὰ τῶν ἐπαγγελιῶν ; ποῦ τὰ τῶν ὑποσχέσεων ; Ἆρα ἠπατήμαι ; ἆρα παρελογίσθην ; πῶς γάρ με λοιπὸν προσκυνήσουσιν οἱ ἀδελφοί, τὸν δοῦλον, τὸν αἰχμάλωτον, τὸν δεσμώτην, τὸν μοιχὸν εἶναι νομιζόμενον, τὸν περὶ τῶν ἐσχάτων κινδυνεύοντα, τὸν τοσοῦτον αὐτῶν ἀπῳκισμένον ; Οἴχεται πάντα ἐκεῖνα καὶ ἀπόλωλεν.
40. Οὐδὲν τούτων οὐκ εἶπεν, οὐκ ἐνενόησεν, ἀλλ' ἀνέμενε τὸ

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τέλος, εἰδὼς καὶ αὐτὸς τοῦ Θεοῦ τὸ εὐμήχανον καὶ τὴν σοφιάν τὴν εὔπορον · καὶ οὐ μόνον οὐκ ἐσκανδαλίζετο, ἀλλὰ καὶ ἐνηβρύνετο καὶ ἐκαλλωπίζετο τοῖς γινομένοις.

41. Τί δὲ ὁ Δαυίδ, εἰπέ μοι ; Οὐ μετὰ τὸ χρισθῆναι εἰς βασιλέα καὶ λαβεῖν τοῦ δήμου τῶν Ἑβραίων τὰ σκῆπτρα τῇ τοῦ Θεοῦ ψήφῳ καὶ τὸ λαμπρὸν ἐκεῖνο στῆσαι τρόπαιον κατὰ τοῦ βαρβάρου, τὰ χαλεπώτατα πάντων ἔπαθε, πολεμούμενος, ἐπιβουλευόμενος παρὰ τοῦ Σαούλ, περὶ αὐτὸ τὸ ζῆν κινδυνεύων, εἰς πολέμους ἐπισφαλεῖς ἐκπεμπόμενος, συνεχῶς πρὸς τὴν ἐρημίαν ἐλαυνόμενος, ἀλήτης, φυγάς, ἄπολις, ἄοικος, μετανάστης γενόμενος. 42. Τί δεῖ τὰ πολλὰ λέγειν ; Τέλος καὶ τῆς πατρίδος καὶ τῆς οἰκείας χώρας ἁπάσης ἐξέπεσεν ἐκείνης, παρὰ βαρβάροις τοῖς πολεμίοις καὶ ἐχθροτάτοις διατρίβων καὶ δουλείας χαλεπωτέραν ὑπομένων ζωήν · καὶ γὰρ καὶ τῆς ἀναγκαίας ἠπόρει τροφῆς. Καὶ ταῦτα ἔπασχε μετὰ τὴν παρουσίαν τοῦ Σαμουήλ, μετὰ τὴν τοῦ ἐλαίου χρῖσιν, μετὰ τὴν τῆς βασιλείας ὑπόσχεσιν, μετὰ τὰ σκῆπτρα, μετὰ τὸ διάδημα, μετὰ τὴν τοῦ Θεοῦ χειροτονίαν καὶ τὴν ψῆφον τὴν ἐπ᾽ αὐτῷ.

43. Καὶ ὅμως οὐδὲν αὐτὸν τούτων ἐσκανδάλισεν, οὐδὲ εἶπεν οὐδὲ οὗτος · "Τί τοῦτο ; Ὁ βασιλεὺς ἐγὼ καὶ τοσαύτης μέλλων ἀρχῆς ἀπολαύσεσθαι, οὐδὲ ἰδιώτης μετὰ ἀσφαλείας εἶναι δύναμαι · ἀλλὰ ἀλήτης γέγονα καὶ φυγάς, ἄπολις, ἄοικος, μετανάστης καὶ εἰς βάρβαρον ἀπηνέχθην χώραν καὶ τῆς ἀναγκαίας ἀπορῶν τροφῆς καὶ περὶ τῶν ἐσχάτων ὁρῶ κἀθ᾽ ἑκάστην ἡμέραν ἐπικρεμάμενόν μοι τὸν κίνδυνον. Ποῦ τῆς βασιλείας αἱ ὑποσχέσεις ; ποῦ τῆς ἀρχῆς αἱ ἐπαγγελίαι

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ἐκείνης ;" Οὐδὲν τούτων οὐκ εἶπεν, οὐκ ἐνενόησεν · οὐκ ἐσκανδαλίσθη τοῖς γινομένοις, ἀλλὰ ἀνέμενε καὶ αὐτὸς τὸ τέλος τῶν ὑποσχέσεων.

44. Καὶ ἑτέρους δὲ μυρίους ἔστιν εἰπεῖν οἳ χαλεποῖς περιπεσόντες πράγμασιν οὐκ ἐθορυβήθησαν, ἀλλὰ τοῦ θεοῦ τὴν ἀπαγγελίαν κατέχοντες, εἰ καὶ ἐναντία τὰ γινόμενα ταῖς ὑποσχέσεσιν ἦν, διὰ τῆς καλλίστης ταύτης ὑπομονῆς λαμπροὺς ἐδρέποντο τοὺς στεφάνους. Καὶ σὺ τοίνυν, ἀγαπητέ, ἀνάμενε τὸ τέλος · πάντως γὰρ ἀπαντήσεται, ἢ ἐνταῦθα ἢ ἐν τῷ μέλλοντι αἰῶνι · καὶ παραχώρει πανταχοῦ τῷ ἀκαταλήπτῳ τῆς τοῦ θεοῦ προνοίας καὶ μὴ λέγε · "Πῶς δὲ τὰ τοσαῦτα κακὰ λήψεται διόρθωσιν ;" μηδὲ περιεργάζου τῆς τοῦ θεοῦ παραδοξοποιίας τὸν τρόπον.

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Chapter Ten

The Ancients were waiting for the outcome of events.

1. At that time Abraham was an old man and because of his old age was as good as dead as far as begetting children was concerned -- he was no more capable of becoming a father than those who had already died, although he continued to live. The righteous man, therefore, was advanced in years, had surpassed the limits ofnature for fathering children, and had Sarah as a companion -- a woman more barren than a rock -- when God proclaimed he would make him a father of so many children that their number would equal the multitude of stars. 2. Abraham, however, faced tremendous obstacles: he had already arrived at a very old age; the age and physical condition of his wife had rendered her incapable of bearing children -- not only did her age prevent her, but also the incapacity of her nature itself. Even while Sarah was young her womb was unfruitful, for she was sterile. 3. Paul describes her situation in this way: "And Sarah's womb was dead."[1] He did not simply say "Sarah's state of death," for fear you would think he was speaking of her age alone, but he refers to the deadness of her womb itself, a condition which had occurred not only as the

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[1] Romans 4: 19

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result of the passing of time, but also because of the weakness of her physical nature. Nevertheless, as I just said, despite such obstacles, Abraham understood the nature of the promise of God, its resourcefulness and richness, that it is not hindered by the laws of nature, nor the inherent difficulty of circumstances, nor by any other consideration, but that it advances through the midst of obstacles and guides what had been proclaimed to fulfillment; 4. Abraham received what had been said to him and believed in the promise, not allowing himself to be at all provoked by the clamor of human speculations. He judged the promise to be trustworthy --as indeed it is -- and that the power of the one who had announced the promise was sufficient for its accomplishment, without questioning how or why these things would take place, or for what reason the promise was not fulfilled in his youth, but rather in his old age, slowly, and after such a long time. 5. On this account, Paul extols him with a clear voice by saying: "who believed with hope against hope that he would become the father of many nations."[2] What is "hope against hope"? Against human hope, in the hope which is in God, which conquers all things, which can do all things, which overcomes all things. And he not only believed he would become a father, but rather the father of so many nations --

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[2] Romans 4: 18

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he who was old and barren, he who had a sterile and aged wife -- according to the word spoken to him: 6. "And so will be your seed. He grew neither weak in faith nor considered his body as good as dead -- as he was around one hundred years old -- nor did he bear in mind the deadness of Sarah's womb. He was not overcome by doubt before the promise of God, but was strengthened in faith, gave glory to God, and was fully assured that God was able to accomplish what he had promised."[3] The meaning of Paul's words is this: After immediately transcending and eluding human weakness, after rising to the height of the one who had promised and having pondered his indescribable power, he was fully persuaded that the promise would be completely fulfilled. 7. He especially glorified God in the following way: by not curiously inquiring into, nor being unduly concerned about the how and wherefore of the promise, but rather by yielding to the incomprehensibility of his wisdom and power without at all doubting what had been spoken. You see, this is especially to glorify God; that is, to always yield to the incomprehensibility of his providence, to his unspeakable power and wisdom, without inappropriately inquiring or prying into it, nor saying, "Why this? For what purpose is this? How will this come about?" 8. It is not only Abraham's attitude of faith toward the promise that is

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[3] Romans 4: 18-21

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admirable; for after the promise he was commanded to sacrifice his son, the only son he had, the legitimate offspring, and not even at that moment was he troubled. And indeed, there were many things that were able to shock the one who was not alert and awake. First, there is the command itself. If God receives such a sacrifice and commands fathers to be the murderers of their own children, to bring their lives to an end through a violent act, to hand their children over to an untimely death, to murder with their own hands those they had begotten, if he wants his altar to be stained with this kind of blood, for the paternal hand to be armed against his only son, for the righteous person to be more cruel than murderers. . . . 9. And along with this, there was the tyranny of human nature groaning and trembling, not only because he was his father, but because he was the loving father of such a child: his legitimate heir, his only son, beautiful to behold, lovely to know. Indeed, Isaac was in the prime of his life; he had reached the zenith of virtue, shining brightly with a two-fold beauty, that of the soul and that of the body. 10. Here was no small reason to love him, a child which had been given to Abraham against all hope. For you know how beloved these kinds of children are, given against hope and expectation and contrary to the laws of nature. Isaac was just this kind of child. And more than all these considerations, we have the announcement and the

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command, circumstances more than able to create a stumblingblock, for what had been commanded was contrary to what had been announced. For the announcement stated that "your descendents will be as numerous as the stars of heaven."[4] But the command ordered him to take his one and only son away from the midst of society, the son from whom the entire world was to be filled, and to deliver him up to a cruel sacrifice and death. 11. Nevertheless, that righteous man did not take offense, nor did he murmur, nor did he suffer in a manner that would be natural for senseless people who are dragged down to the earth. Nor did he say to himself: "What is this? Was I misled? Was I led astray? Could this be a command of God? Certainly not! I am not going to obey. It couldn't be right for me to become the murderer of my own child, to redden my hand with blood such as this. How, then, will the promise be accomplished? If I destroy the root, how will the branches grow? How will the fruit blossom? If I block up the spring, how will the rivers flow? If I sacrifice my son, how will I have the multitude of descendents who will equal the multitude of the stars? 12. How can God have promised certain things and now command contrary things?" He didn't say any of these things, nor did he think them. Instead, he again fled for refuge to the power of the one who made the promise -- a

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[4] Genesis 15: 5

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power that is indescribable, resourceful, ingenious, a power that manifests itself in contrary circumstances, is mightier than any opposition, is not limited by the laws of nature, and admits no obstacle. He obeyed the command with full conviction and sacrificed his son; he stained his hand with his blood, bloodied his sword, and drove the sacrificial knife through his throat. For even if he did not actually fulfill the work, he accomplished all these acts in his resolution. 13. This is why Moses, as he expressed his admiration for him, spoke this way: "And after these words, God tested Abraham and said to him: 'Take Isaac your dear son, whom you have loved, and carry him up on one of the mountains I will show you.'"[5] Can these be the words of the promise, the words of the announcement, the words which state that he will be the father of a multitude of descendents and that his seed will be as the stars of heaven? 14. Note how, after these words, when Abraham had heard the command to sacrifice his son, he willingly consented to kill and sacrifice the one from whom the multitude was to come, to remove him from the land of the living and to offer him as a sacrifice to God. Paul again expresses his admiration for him when he sings his praises this way: "When put to the test Abraham offered up Isaac by faith." Then demonstrating what a great thing he did and

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[5] Genesis 22: 1-2

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what faith he displayed, Paul adds: "The one who had received the promises was offering his one and only son."[6]

15. His point is this: It is not as though Abraham had two legitimate sons and, if the first son was destroyed, expected the other to become the father of a multitude; he had only the one son and the terms of the promise depended on him alone. Nevertheless, he chose to sacrifice this son; just as with the promise of his birth neither his own deadness nor his wife's natural handicaps hindered his faith, so neither was his faith impeded by death.

16. Compare, therefore, these events with those that have presently taken place and you will perceive your faint-heartedness and the weakness of those who are being thrown into confusion. You will clearly comprehend that the offence originates from no other source than from a refusal to yield to the incomprehensible providence of God and a desire to seek after the why and wherefore of his plans -- to demand an explanation of the causes of events and to try to pry inquisitively into the reason for each occurrence. If Abraham had suffered this way, his faith would soon have been crippled. But he did not act in an indiscrete and curious manner. Because of this he was radiant and attained all the things that had been announced. He was not shocked -- neither by his age nor by the command given after these

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[6] Hebrews 11: 17

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things. He did not reckon that the command was an obstacle to the promise, nor that the sacrifice was destructive of the promise; he did not fall into despair concerning the promise, although he had come to the very point of completing the sacrifice. Don't tell me that God didn't allow the command to be realized or the righteous man's hands to be bloodied. Rather, consider that Abraham had no awareness of the these things -- neither that he would regain his son alive nor that he would return home with him alive and well. Instead, he was focusing all his attention on the sacrifice. 18. It is for this reason that a voice calls to him twice from heaven. For the voice did not simply call to him : "Abraham," but "Abraham, Abraham,"[7] through the repetition of his name restraining and arresting his intention which was focused solely on the sacrifice, so complete was his absorption on the command. You see how he had already accomplished the act in his intention -- there was absolutely no stumbling block. The reason? He didn't meddle in God's affairs. 19. Now what about Joseph? Tell me what you think. Didn't he himself suffer something similar? For the immense grace of the promise was also given to him from God and yet events were occurring which were contrary to the promise. The promise given through his dreams was that his brothers would bow down before him and a

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[7] Genesis 22: 11

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twofold vision proclaimed this -- that of the stars and that of the sheafs of grain. And yet the events which were occurring after the visions were contrary to the dreams. 20. First, a cruel war was stirred up against him in the house of his father. His brothers broke the bonds of childbirth that bound them to him, severing the laws of family relationships. They tore apart the bands of brotherly love itself, having overturned the very laws of nature. After Joseph's dreams they became foes, enemies, and more savage than wolves toward their brother. Just as wild and savage beasts seize a young lamb, so his brothers were daily plotting against him. 21. The father of this war was irrational envy and unjust malice. Seething with anger, each day they reeked with the odor of murder, envy kindling this furnace and stirring up the fire. Since they were unable to do anything worse to him for a long time -- Joseph was sticking close to home and living with his parents -- they attacked his understanding of the dreams, manufactured a disgraceful reputation for him, and charged him with a wicked accusation, desiring to destroy his father's love and making it easier to grasp him in their plot. 22. After these incidents, having come upon him far from the view of his father's eyes, having discovered him in the wilderness, at the very moment he was providing them with food and paying them a visit, they were sharpening their swords and preparing themselves for the slaughter --

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they showed no respect for the reason behind his arrival, nor were they ashamed as they ate at the table he prepared for them. All of them became the murderers of their brother without having any accusation, either small or great, against the one whose disappearance they were soon to bring about. And yet thanks to them, he should have been crowned and proclaimed -- those who were envying him, fighting him, and slandering him. 23. As for Joseph, he did not turn away from their company. Instead, even in the midst of such wickedness, he exhibited the disposition of a brother. They, however, were trying to do away with him. For their part, they destroyed him, bloodied their hands, and completed the fratricide. 24. Yet the wisdom of God, inventive and resourceful in difficult circumstances, even in the pit, before the attack of death itself, snatched him away from their blood stained hands. For one of the brothers advised them not to commit the murder. God, however, was the one who impelled him to do this and prevented the slaughter. Joseph's sufferings did not cease here, but went much further. Because the brothers were prevented from carrying out the murder, their anger boiled anew, their wrath reached its zenith, and their passions raged out of control like a storm at sea. They altered the shape of their wrath into a new form. 25. After they stripped off his clothes, tied him up, and cast him in the pit, these inhuman men, like savage beasts, sat down to

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enjoy the table he had laid out for them. On the one hand, Joseph was in the pit fearing the worst. On the other hand, his brothers were eating and getting drunk. Their madness did not stop here. Having seen from afar a band of foreigners on their way to Egypt, they took their brother and sold him as a slave, concocting another kind of death for him, something longer, crueler, and filled with great misery. 26. Now this lad, who indeed was just a stripling, had been raised in complete freedom in the house of his father, coming and going as he pleased, and had absolutely no experience of slavery and the suffering it entails. Imagine what he was suffering -- suddenly a slave instead of a free man, a stranger instead of a citizen, enduring the worse kind of captivity; he underwent not only slavery, but also separation from his father, mother, and all his other relatives. He was naked, a stranger, without a home, without a city, delivered by the law of slavery into the hands of barbarians. 27. Wasn't this enough to arouse his anxiety: the accumulation of events, the unexpected, the denial of hope, and the severity of the calamity. He suffered all this from his brothers -- indeed, from brothers whom he loved and had never wronged in any way, small or great. Rather, he had shown them great kindness. And then to suffer such treatment? Nevertheless, he was not baffled by any of these things. Yet he was led away to Egypt by those merchants, exhanging one kind of slavery for another.

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28. That is, in Egypt he again became a slave and lived in a foreign household, though he was a Hebrew, of noble stock, and possessor of a two-fold liberty, that of the body and that of the soul. He was not at all troubled there, nor was he shocked by the occurrence of these events, for he reminded himself of the dreams which announced contrary things. Neither was he unduly concerned about these matters, asking himself: "How could these things have ever happened?" 29. While the murderers of their brother, the wolves and beasts who had wrongfully committed these acts, are living in luxury in their father's house, the one expected to be their king is a prisoner, a slave, sold into foreign hands, enduring the worst affliction -- not only the pain of never having reigned over them, but also the anguish of becoming their slave, having suffered events diametrically opposed to the promises. He not only failed to obtain the kingdom, but was deprived of his homeland, his freedom, and the sight of his parents. 30. His struggles didn't end here. Rather, another deeper pit opened up, containing death and murder -- a shameful death and a murder filled with disgrace. For the woman who had acquired him, after gazing upon him with unrighteous eyes, was beside herself over the beauty of the young man. Mastered by the radiance of his appearance, she too devised treacheries and plots. 31. After she had stretched out the nets of her licentiousness in every direction, she lay in wait each day

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to seize the young man in her snare, to throw him into the pit of adultery and to deliver him over to a death which never dies. Each day she went out in pursuit of her prey, incited by her passion and unbridled love. One day she found him alone; she tried to drag him by force on to the bed of iniquity and to compel him to join himself to a foreigner as she attempted to spoil his virtue.

32. Nevertheless, that righteous man suffered nothing grievous; the tyranny of lust, the clamors of a young age, the treacherous plan of an undisciplined woman, the assaults of his mistress, the tumults of youth, all the possibilities that might come to pass from the touch of that woman, from her appearance and frenzied passion -- he easily passed through the midst of all these temptations, much like an eagle which has stretched out his wings to carry him to the heights. Having stripped off his clothes, he left them behind in her licentious hands and fled the scene naked; his only covering was the radiance of chastity, a garment more distinguished than even a purple robe.

33. Afterwards she again sharpened her sword. Death prepared itself. The waves lifted themselves up even higher and the madness of the woman flamed more violently than the furnace of Babylon. Henceforth, her desire was raised to even greater heights. Anger, another even more grievous passion, joined in with extreme savagery. The woman turned to murder and was running for the sword. She promoted the

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most lawless murder and hastened to destroy the athlete of virtue and the champion of patience and endurance.

34. Having burst in on her husband, she told him what had transpired -- not at all according to the truth of the matter. Instead, she devised a slanderous drama to render a verdict in line with her own desires. Using her isolation in the house as a pretext for her accusation, she acted as though she had been wronged and sought vengeance. As proof for her claim she produced the innocent young man's clothes.

35. The corrupted judge never brought the accused before a court of justice nor did he give him a chance to speak; he treated him as already caught and convicted, though Joseph had never had the chance to appear in court. He condemned him as already having consummated the adultery; he threw him into prison and delivered him over to chains. From this time on Joseph, adorned with so many crowns of virtue, was in prison with cheats, grave robbers, murderers -- with people who had dared to commit the worst crimes.

36. Nevertheless, none of these events was troubling him. While the chief cup-bearer who had offended Pharoah was released, Joseph remained in prison for a long time, suffering the most severe punishment for acts for which he really should have been crowned and praised. And yet he was neither disturbed nor offended, nor did he say: "What's going on? Why is this happening? I'm destined to reign over my brothers and not only have I been deprived of this

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honor, but I've also lost my homeland, house and parents; I've been destroyed by those destined to bow down before me. 37. After being sold for the slaughter, I have become a slave of foreigners and am exchanged for new masters. And my sufferings have not ceased at this point, but there are pits and cliffs everywhere. For after the plot of my brothers, the plan to do away with me, my bondage in slavery -- both the first and second time -- death again set its sights on me; I am slandered with a false accusation worse than the first -- a plot, an attack, a corrupt court, a shame-filled accusation giving birth to a renewed attempt to bring about my death. 38. Without having any opportunity to defend myself I was simply carried away to prison; I find myself bound in chains with adulterers, murderers, and criminals who have dared to commit the worst crimes. While the chief cup-bearer was set free from chains and prison, I have not been able to enjoy with him the same kind of amnesty. For him, the dream has turned out according to my interpretation, while I live among desperate evils. 39. Did my visions predict these kinds of events? How are these circumstances related to the number of stars in the sky, or to the sheafs of wheat? Where are the things that were announced? Where are the things that were promised? Should I conclude I was mistaken? Was I misled in my understanding of the visions? How will my brothers ever bow down to me -- to a slave, a captive, a prisoner in chains, a

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supposed adulterer, one continually exposed to severe dangers, one removed so far away from them? All these promises have passed away and perished." 40. Joseph said none of these things, nor did he think these kinds of thoughts. Rather, he was awaiting the final outcome of events, knowing full well the resourcefulness of God and the ingenuity of his wisdom. Not only was he not led into sin, but he was exulting and taking pride in the events that had occurred. 41. What about David? Tell me what you think. Wasn't it after he had been anointed king and received power and authority over the people of Israel by the decree of God, after he had raised that magnificent trophy over Goliath, that he suffered the most cruel experiences? While he waged war, he was plotted against by Saul -- continually at risk for his life itself, sent out to fight precarious wars, repeatedly driven out into the wilderness, misunderstood, a fugitive, without city, without home, transformed into a wanderer. 42. What more should be said about all these things? At the end he was banished from his own homeland and country; he lived among hostile and hated foreigners and endured a life worse than slavery. For David was even in want of basic nourishment. And he suffered these things after the appearance of Samuel, after the anointing with oil, after the promise of the kingdom, after receiving the sceptre and the diadem, and after God's election and decree concerning him.

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43. Nevertheless, not one of these events knocked him off his feet nor did he begin to talk like this: "What's going on here? I am the king. I was about to enjoy such a kingdom and now I can't even live as a common person in safety. I have become a vagabond and exile, without a city, without a home, a wanderer; I have been carried off to a foreign land and lack even one day's food. In the midst of the worst sufferings I perceive danger hanging over me each day. Where are the promises of the kingdom? Where are the announcements of that dominion?" He did not say any of these things, nor did he think them. He was not disturbed by the things that were occurring, but he himself was awaiting the fulfillment of the promises. 44. Now one could speak of thousands of others who, having fallen into difficult circumstances, were not troubled, but instead held on to the declaration of God, even as events contrary to the promises occurred. Because of this most noble endurance they gained for themselves radiant crowns. And you, therefore, my Friend, wait for the final outcome. For all things will certainly turn out, whether in this life or the life to come. In every circumstance yield to the incomprehensibility of God's providence and stop saying: "How will so many evils ever be straightened out?" And stop curiously inquiring into the manner of God's wonder-working in the world.

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Κεφ. ια΄. Ὅτι οὐκ εὐθέως τοῦτο γέγονε καὶ ὅτι ἐν ἀρχῇ ἐναντία ἅπαντα βλέποντες οἱ ἅγιοι οὐκ ἐσκανδαλίζοντο

1. Οὐδὲ γὰρ οἱ δίκαιοι τότε ἐκεῖνοι τοῦτο ἐζήτουν τό· Πῶς καὶ τίνι τρόπῳ ταῦτα ἔσται· ἀλλ᾽ ὁρῶντες εἰς ἀπόγνωσιν κατὰ ἀνθρώπινον λογισμὸν πάντα φερούμενα, οὐδὲ οὕτως ἐθορυβοῦντο, οὐδὲ ἐταράττοντο· ἀλλ᾽ ἔφερον ἅπαντα γενναίως, μεγίστην ἔχοντες ἀπόδειξιν τῶν ἐσομένων χρηστῶν τὴν δύναμιν τοῦ ὑποσχομένου καὶ ἀπὸ τῆς τῶν γινομένων ἐναντιότητος εἰς ἀπόγνωσιν οὐκ ἐμπίπτοντες.

2. Ἤδεσαν γὰρ σαφῶς ὅτι εὐμήχανος ὢν καὶ σοφός, δυνήσεται καὶ μετὰ τὸ τὰ πράγματα ἀπαγορευθῆναι ἀνακτήσασθαι ταῦτα μᾶλλον ἢ ἔμπροσθεν καὶ μετὰ πολλῆς τῆς εὐκολίας τοῖς ἐπαγγελθεῖσιν ἐπιθεῖναι τὸ τέλος. Καὶ σὺ τοίνυν, ἀγαπητέ, ἄν τε ἐν τῷ παρόντι βίῳ λάβῃ τὰ λυπηρὰ λύσιν, δοξάζε τὸν θεὸν· ἄν τε εἰς τὰ δυσχερῆ καταλύσῃ, καὶ οὕτως εὐχαρίστει καὶ μὴ σκανδαλίζου, διδὼς σαφῶς τοῦ θεοῦ τὴν πρόνοιαν τὴν ἄπειρον καὶ ἑρμηνευθῆναι μὴ δυναμένην καὶ ὅτι πάντως λήψεται τὸ προσῆκον ἅπαντα τὸ τέλος, εἴτε ἐν τῷ παρόντι βίῳ, εἴτε ἐν τῷ μέλλοντι. 3. Εἰ δέ τις τὸ μέλλον ἀκούων καὶ μικροψυχῶν ἐπείγοιτο τοῦτο ἐνταῦθα ἰδεῖν γινόμενον, ἐροῦμεν ὅτι ἡ ἀληθὴς ζωὴ καὶ τὰ βέβαια πράγματα καὶ ἀκίνητα τότε ἡμᾶς μένει. Τὰ μὲν γὰρ παρόντα, ὁδός, ἐκεῖνα δέ, πατρίς· τὰ ἐνταῦθα ἄνθεσιν ἔοικεν ἐαρινοῖς, ἐκεῖνα δὲ πέτραις ἀκινήτοις· ἐκεῖ στέφανοι καὶ ἀμοιβαὶ τέλος οὐκ ἔχουσαι, ἐκεῖ ἔπαθλα καὶ βραβεῖα, ἐκεῖ κολάσεις καὶ τιμωρίαι ἀφόρητοι τῶν τὰ τοιαῦτα κακουργησάντων.

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4. Τί οὖν πρὸς τοὺς τέως σκανδαλιζομένους ἐρεῖς ; Τοὺς μειζόνως διαλάμποντας οὐ λέγεις, τοὺς δὲ προσωπεῖα εὐλαβείας περικειμένους καὶ νῦν ἐλεγχομένους, τούτους ἄγεις εἰς μέσον. Οὐχ ὁρᾷς τὸ χρυσίον καθαιρόμενον ; τὸν μόλιβδον ἐλεγχόμενον; τὰ ἄχυρα διακρινόμενα τοῦ σίτου ; τοὺς λύκους τῶν προβάτων ; τοὺς πεπλασμένους τῶν ἀληθῶς ἐν εὐλαβείᾳ ζώντων ; Ὥστε ὅταν ἴδῃς τούτων τὰ σκάνδαλα, ἐννόησον κἀκείνων τὰς εὐδοκιμήσεις.

5. Ὑπεσκελίσθησάν τινες, ἀλλὰ καὶ ἔστησαν πολλῷ πλείους καὶ μείζονα ἑαυτοῖς μισθὸν συνήγαγον, οὔτε τῇ δυναστείᾳ τῶν ἐπιβουλευόντων, οὔτε τῇ δυσκολίᾳ τῶν καιρῶν περιτραπέντες. Καὶ οἱ σκανδαλιζόμενοι δὲ ἑαυτοῖς λογιζέσθωσαν · ἐπεὶ καὶ οἱ παῖδες οἱ τρεῖς καὶ ἱερῶν ἀποσπασθέντες καὶ ναοῦ καὶ θυσιαστηρίου καὶ τῆς ἄλλης ἁπάσης τῆς κατὰ νόμον ἐπιμελείας καὶ ἐν μέσῃ βαρβάρων χώρᾳ ἀποληφθέντες, μετὰ πολλῆς τῆς ἀκριβείας τὸν νόμον διετήρησαν · καὶ ὁ Δανιὴλ ὁμοίως καὶ ἕτεροι πολλοί · καὶ οἱ μὲν εἰς αἰχμαλωσίαν ἀπενεχθέντες οὐ παρεβλάβησάν τι, ἄλλοι δὲ οἴκοι μένοντες καὶ πάντων ἀπολαύοντες τῶν ἐπὶ τῆς πατρίδος, προσέκρουσαν καὶ κατεδικάσθησαν.

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Chapter Eleven

The realization of the promises did not occur immediately. Yet the saints were not shocked when they noted that at the beginning of events all things were contrary to what had been promised.

1. The righteous ones of former times didn't seek the "how" and "by what means" the promises would be realized. Although they saw everything enduring in a condition of despair as far as the promises were concerned -- when they viewed events from the perspective of human reason -- they weren't troubled, nor were they alarmed. Instead, they bore all things nobly, having the power of the one who had made the promises as a forceful proof of a favorable future; they weren't falling into despair because of the contrary nature of the events which were presently occurring. 2. They clearly recognized that God, being resourceful and wise, would be able to restore things to an even better condition than before, even after the failure of events to be fulfilled, and that the things which had been promised could be brought to fulfillment with the utmost ease. And you, therefore, beloved, if you experience deliverance from your sufferings in this present life, glorify God. If your life ends in severe difficulties, even then offer thanks. Don't be offended or led into sin, understanding clearly the

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indescribable providential care of God which cannot be explained. At any rate, everything will receive a fitting end, whether this be in the present life or in the life of the future. 3. Now if someone hears talk about the future and, being faint-hearted, would hasten to see it realized at the present time, we will tell him that the true life and the trustworthy and unchanging realities await us in the future. For the circumstances and events of the present life have the character of a journey, but the realities of the future await us in our true homeland. The things of the present life are like the flowers of spring, those of the future like immovable rocks. There above are crowns and rewards which have no end; there above are prizes for the contests and combats of this present life. Here below unbearable retributions for those who have done evil. 4. But you will say: "What about those people who in the meanwhile are shocked by events?" You are not referring to those who shine to an even greater degree in these circumstances, but rather of those who are wearing masks of piety and are now convicted of their error. Don't you see gold being purified? Lead being tested? The chaff being separated from the wheat? The wolves being distinguished from the sheep? Those who are living in genuine piety from those who are living falsely? Therefore, when you see the scandals caused by these, take note of the good reputation of those others. 5. Some people have been upset by present

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events, but many more remain standing and have gathered for themselves a much greater reward; they are not overturned by the power of those who strive against them nor by the difficulty of the times. As for those who are stumbling, let them reflect on their present state. Indeed, the three children were dragged away from priests, temple, altar, and all other obligations concerning the law. They were carried off to a foreign land, and yet still observed the law with great exactness. Daniel acted in the same way and many others. While those carried away into captivity were not harmed at all, those who remained in their homes, enjoying all the good things of their homeland, stumbled and were condemned.

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Κεφ. ιβ΄. Τίνος ἕνεκεν ἀφέθησαν ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ τούτῳ καὶ οἱ ἄνθρωποι πονηροὶ καὶ δαίμονες καὶ διάβολος

1. Εἰ δὲ ζητοίης τίνος ἕνεκεν ταῦτα συνεχθρήθη, καὶ μὴ τοῖς ἀρρήτοις τῶν οἰκονομῶν αὐτοῦ λόγοις παραχωροίης, ἀλλὰ ἐμελέτησας ἀεὶ πάντα περιεργάζεσθαι, ὁδῷ προβαίνων καὶ ἄλλα πολλὰ διαπορήσεις, οἷον, τίνος ἕνεκεν ἀφείθησαν αἱ αἱρέσεις, τίνος ἕνεκεν ὁ διάβολος, τίνος ἕνεκεν οἱ δαίμονες, τίνος ἕνεκεν οἱ πονηροὶ τῶν ἀνθρώπων καὶ πολλοὺς ὑποσκελιζοντες, καὶ τὸ δὴ κεφάλαιον ἁπάντων τούτων, τίνος ἕνεκεν ὁ Ἀντίχριστος παραγίνεται, ὁ τοσαύτην ἔχων δύναμιν πρὸς ἀπάτην ὡς τὸν Χριστὸν εἰπεῖν ὅτι τοιαῦτα ποιήσει ὥστε πλανῆσαι, εἰ δυνατόν, καὶ τοὺς ἐκλεκτούς.

2. Ἀλλ' οὐ δεῖ ταῦτα ζητεῖν, ἀλλὰ πάντα παραχωρεῖν τῷ ἀκαταλήπτῳ τῆς τοῦ θεοῦ σοφίας. Ὁ μὲν γὰρ γενναίως ἤδη πεπηγώς, κἂν μυρία τὰ κύματα, κἂν μυριοι οἱ χειμῶνες ἐπιῶσιν, οὐ μόνον οὐδὲν παραβλάπτεται, ἀλλὰ καὶ ἰσχυρότερος γίνεται · ὁ δὲ ἀσθενὴς καὶ διαρρέων καὶ ὀλίγωρος καὶ μηδενὸς ἐνοχλοῦντος καταπίπτει πολλάκις. Εἰ δὲ καὶ λόγον τινὰ ἐπιζητεῖς μαθεῖν, ἄκουε τὸν ἡμῖν γνώριμον. Εἰσὶ μὲν γὰρ καὶ ἕτεροι πολλοὶ τῷ διαφόρως καὶ ποικίλως τὰ καθ' ἡμᾶς πάντα οἰκονομοῦντι δῆλοι · ὃν δὲ ἡμεῖς ἴσμεν, οὗτός ἐστι τεώς.

3. Φαμὲν ὅτι τὰ σκάνδαλα ταῦτα ἀφείθη ὑπὲρ τοῦ μὴ ἐλαττωθῆναι τῶν γενναίων τὰ βραβεῖα · ὅ καὶ τῷ Ἰωβ διαλεγόμενος ὁ θεὸς ἐδήλωσε, λέγων · "Ἄλλως με οἴει σοι κεχρηματικέναι ἢ ἵνα ἀναφανῇς δίκαιος;" 4. Καὶ ὁ Παῦλος δέ

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φησι · "Δεῖ δὲ καὶ αἱρέσεις εἶναι, ἵνα οἱ δόκιμοι φανεροὶ γένωνται ἐν ὑμῖν." Σὺ δὲ ὅταν ἀκούῃς το· "Δεῖ δὲ αἱρέσεις εἶναι", μὴ νομίσῃς ὅτι κελεύων ἢ νομοθετῶν ταῦτά φησιν. Ἄπαγε · ἀλλὰ τὸ μέλλον προαναφωνῶν, καὶ τὸ ἐκ τούτου κέρδος τοῖς νήφουσι προμηνύων. Τότε γὰρ ὑμῶν τῶν ἀνεξαπατήτων, φησί, σαφέστερον φανεῖται ἡ ἀρετή.

5. Πρὸς τούτοις καὶ δι' ἑτέραν αἰτίαν οἱ πονηροὶ ἀφειθησαν ὥστε μὴ προαναρπασθέντας ἀποκλεισθῆναι τῆς ὠφελείας τῆς ἐκ τῆς μεταβολῆς αὐτοῖς γενομένης. Οὕτω καὶ Παῦλος ἐσώθη, οὕτως ὁ ληστής, οὕτως ἡ πόρνη, οὕτως ὁ τελώνης, οὕτως ἕτεροι πολλοί. Εἰ δὲ πρὶν ἢ μεταβαλέσθαι δὲ τοῦ Ἀντιχριστου καὶ ἑτέραν φησὶν αἰτίαν ὁ Παῦλος. Ποίαν δὴ ταύτην ; Το πᾶσαν καὶ ἐντεῦθεν ἀποκλεισθῆναι τῶν Ἰουδαίων τὴν ἀπολογιάν. Ποίαν γὰρ ἂν σχοῖεν συγγνώμην, τὸν Χριστὸν μὴ δεξάμενοι, οἱ μέλλοντες ἐκείνῳ πιστεύειν ; Διό φησιν · "Ἵνα κριθῶσι πάντες οἱ μὴ πιστεύσαντες τῇ ἀληθείᾳ", τοῦτ' ἔστι, τῷ Χριστῷ, "ἀλλ' εὐδοκήσαντες τῇ ἀδικίᾳ", τοῦτ' ἔστι, τῷ Ἀντιχρίστῳ. Ἐπειδὴ γὰρ ἔλεγον διὰ τοῦτο αὐτῷ μὴ πιστεύειν, ἐπειδὴ θεὸν ἑαυτὸν ἔλεγε · 6. "Διὰ γὰρ τοῦτο σε, φησί, λιθάζομεν, ὅτι σύ ἄνθρωπος ὢν ποιεῖς σεαυτὸν θεόν" · καίτοι γε τὰ πλείονα ἀκούοντες ἀνατιθέντα αὐτὸν τῷ Πατρὶ καὶ λέγοντα μετὰ τῆς ἐκείνου γνώμης ἀφιχθαι καὶ δια πολλῶν τοῦτο ἀποδεικνύντα · τί ἐροῦσιν, ὅταν τὸν Ἀντίχριστον τὸν λέγοντα ἑαυτὸν εἶναι θεὸν καὶ μηδὲ μεμνημένον τοῦ Πατρός, ἀλλὰ καὶ τοὐναντίον ποιοῦντα δέξωνται ; Τοῦτο καὶ ὁ Χριστὸς αὐτοῖς ὀνειδίζων, προὔλεγεν

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οὕτω λέγων · "Ἐγὼ ἦλθον ἐν τῷ ὀνόματι τοῦ Πατρός μου καὶ οὐ λαμβάνετέ με · ἐὰν ἄλλος ἔλθῃ ἐν τῷ ὀνόματι τῷ ἰδιῴ, ἐκεῖνον λήψεσθε" · διὰ ταῦτα ἀφείθη τὰ σκάνδαλα.

7. Εἰ δὲ τοὺς σκανδαλιζομένους λέγεις, ἐγώ σοι τοὺς μειζόνως ἐντεῦθεν διαλάμψαντας δείξω · καὶ πάλιν σοι τὸ αὐτὸ ἐρῶ ὅτι οὐκ ἔδει διὰ τὴν ἑτέρων ἀπροσεξιάν καὶ ῥᾳθυμιάν τοὺς δυναμένους νήφειν καὶ ἐγρηγορέναι καὶ ἐν τῇ τῶν ἀμοιβῶν ἀντιδόσει. Οὗτοι μὲν γὰρ ἐπηρεάζεσθαι ἔμελλον, εἰ μὴ τῶν ἀγώνων τούτων ἔλαβον ὑποθέσεις · οἱ δὲ ἐντεῦθεν βλαβέντες, ἑτέρῳ μὲν οὐδενί, ἑαυτοῖς δὲ εἶεν δίκαιοι λογίζεσθαι τὰ πτώματα αὐτῶν καὶ κατηγοροῖεν ἂν αὐτῶν οἱ μὴ μόνον μὴ σκανδαλισθέντες, ἀλλὰ καὶ φαιδρότεροι καὶ ἰσχυρότεροι ταύτῃ γινόμενοι.

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Chapter Twelve

Why have evil people, demons, and the devil been permitted to exist and act in this world?

1. If you would inquire why these things are allowed, and won't yield to the indescribable reasons behind God's plans, but have taken pains to search curiously into the why and wherefore of everything, always charging ahead, you will be at a loss concerning many matters. For instance: Why have heresies been permitted? Why the devil? Why demons? Why evil people who cause many to stumble? And the foremost of these questions -- Why does the Antichrist come, the one who possesses such power to deceive that Christ declares he will so act as to deceive, if it was possible, even the elect?
2. But one has no need to examine these matters, but rather to submit all these questions to the incomprehensibility of God's wisdom. On the one hand, the person already nobly fixed on God is not only not harmed, but actually becomes even stronger, even if there be thousands of waves, yes, thousands of storms assailing him. On the other hand, the weak, feeble, and careless individual, even if he is troubled by nothing, often falls. If you are seeking to learn the reason behind something, pay attention to what is well-known to us. For it is clear there are many other reasons behind the actions of the God who governs in a

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diverse and complex manner all things concerning us. In the meantime, let us turn to that which we do know.

3. We maintain that these difficulties are permitted so that the rewards of the noble are not diminished. This is what God made clear as he conversed with Job, saying: "Do you suppose that I have dealt with you for any other reason than that you should be shown to be righteous?"[1] 4. And Paul says: "It is necessary that there be heresies in order that those who are genuine might become manifest among you."[2]

And you, when you hear Paul say: "It is necessary that there be heresies," do not suppose he is saying this as a command or to make a new law. Certainly not! Rather, he is proclaiming beforehand what is destined to be, and is indicating in advance that those who are sober-minded will profit from the existence of heresies. For he says that the virtue of those who are undeceived at that time will appear more distinct. 5. In addition to these, there is another reason to be mentioned: evil people are tolerated so that they are not cut off from the profit coming to them from their conversion -- which would have happened if they had been snatched away beforehand. Paul's conversion

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[1] Job 40: 8

[2] 1 Cor. 11: 19

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illustrates this truth, as does that of the thief, the prostitute, the publican, and many others. If they had been snatched away from this life before they were converted, not one of them would have been saved. Paul gives another reason regarding the Antichrist. What is it? To cut off every defense of the Jews. What kind of excuse would they have, those who did not receive the Christ, the very people who must believe in him? For this reason Paul says: "So that all who do not believe in the truth might be judged," that is, in the Christ, "but they took delight in unrighteousness,"[3] that is, in the Antichrist. For they said they did not believe in Christ because he said he was God. 6. "We are stoning you because you, a human being, make yourself out to be God."[4] And yet for the most part they heard him referring to the Father and saying that he had come according to his will, demonstrating this in many ways. What will they say when they welcome the Antichrist, who declares himself to be God and makes no mention of the Father, but does the very opposite? Christ reproaches them about this when he proclaimed beforehand: "I came in the name of my Father and you did not receive me. If another should come in his own name, you will receive him." Because

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[3] 2 Thess. 2: 12

[4] John 10: 33

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of reasons such as these difficulties are permitted. 7. If you speak about those who stumble over the difficulties God allows, I will in turn show you people who have shined more brightly because of them. Again I will say the same thing to you -- those who were able to be attentive, awake, and crowned with a thousand crowns should not be put in an inferior position at the time when awards are distributed because of the carelessness and thoughtlessness of others. These people would have been wronged if they had not had the opportunity to take part in the battles this present life affords. As for those people who are harmed in this life, they would be just in attributing their misfortunes to themselves and not to anybody else. It is not only those who did not stumble over the difficulties God allows who could condemn them, but also those who became more radiant and powerful by keeping on their feet.

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Κεφ. ιγ΄. Ὅτι τοὺς νήφοντας οὐδὲν παραβλάπτει οὐδὲ σκανδαλίζει

1. Ποίων γὰρ ἱερέων ἀπήλαυσεν ὁ Ἀβραάμ, εἰπέ μοι ; ποιῶν διδασκάλων ; ποίας κατηχήσεως ; ποίας παραινέσεως ; ποίας συμβουλῆς ; ὅπουγε οὐδὲ γράμματα τότε ἦν, οὐ νόμος, οὐ προφῆται, οὐκ ἄλλο τῶν τοιούτων οὐδέν · ἀλλὰ ἁπλοῦν εἶπλει θάλατταν καὶ ὁδὸν ὥδευεν ἀτριβῆ καὶ ταῦτα καὶ οἰκίας καὶ πατρὸς ἀσεβοῦς γεγενημένος. Καὶ ὅμως οὐδὲν αὐτὸν ταῦτα παρέβλαψεν, ἀλλὰ τοσοῦτον ἔλαμψεν ἀρετῇ ὡς ἅ μετὰ μακρὸν χρόνον, μετὰ προφήτας, μετὰ νόμον καὶ τοσαύτην παιδαγωγίαν, τὴν διὰ σημείων καὶ θαυμάτων γεγενημένην ἣν ἔμελλεν ὁ Χριστὸς τοὺς ἀνθρώπους παιδεύειν, 2. ταῦτα προλαβὼν δι᾽ ἔργων ἐπεδείξατο, ἀγάπην γνησίαν καὶ θερμήν, χρημάτων ὑπεροψίαν, τὴν περὶ τοὺς οἰκείους τοῦ σπέρματος κηδεμονίαν · καὶ τὸν τῦφον δὲ ἅπαντα ἐπάτησε καὶ τὸν ὑγρὸν καὶ διαλελυμένον διεκρούσατο βίον, τῶν νῦν τὰς κορυφὰς τῶν ὀρῶν κατειληφότων μοναχῶν ἀκριβέστερον ζῶν. 3. Οὔτε γὰρ οἰκία ἦν αὐτῷ, ἀλλ᾽ ἡ σκιὰ τῶν φύλλων ὄροφος ἦν τῷ δικαιῷ καὶ στέγη · οὐδὲ, ἐπειδὴ ξένος ἦν, ῥᾳθυμότερος περὶ τὴν φιλοξενίαν ἐγένετο, ἀλλ᾽ ὁ ξένος ἐν ξένῃ ἔργον τοῦτο ἐποιέι, τὸ διηνεκῶς ἐν μεσημβρίᾳ μέσῃ τοὺς παριόντας ὑποδέχεσθαι καὶ θεραπεύειν. Καὶ δι᾽ ἑαυτοῦ τὸ ἔργον ἅπαν ἦνυε καὶ τὴν γυναῖκα κοινωνὸν ἐποίει τῆς καλῆς ταύτης πραγματείας.
4. Τί δὲ ὑπὲρ τοῦ ἀδελφιδοῦ καὶ ταῦτα οὐ καθηκόντως αὐτῷ χρησαμένου, ἀλλὰ τοῖς πρωτείοις επιπηδήσαντος, οὐκ ἐποίησε

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καὶ ταῦτα μετὰ τὴν ἅιρεσιν τῆς ἐκλογῆς ; Οὐχὶ τὸ αἷμα ἐξέχεεν ; οὐχὶ τοὺς οἰκέτας ἅπαντας ὡπλισεν ; οὐκ εἰς φανερὸν κίνδυνον ἑαυτὸν ἐνέβαλεν ; Ὅτε δὲ ἐκελεύσθη τὴν μὲν οἰκίαν ἀφεῖναι, εἰς δὲ τὴν ἀλλοτριάν ἀπελθεῖν, οὐκ εὐθέως ὑπήκουσε καὶ πατρίδα καὶ φίλους καὶ συγγενεῖς καὶ πάντας ἀφεὶς καὶ τῷ προστάγματι πεισθεὶς τοῦ κελεύσαντος, τὰ μὲν δῆλα καταλιμπάνων, τοῖς δὲ ἀδήλοις πολλῷ σαφέστερον ἢ τοῖς δήλοις προσέχων, διὰ τὴν ὑποσχεσιν τοῦ θεοῦ, ὅπερ ἦν πίστεως ἐπιτεταμένης ;

5. Μετὰ δὲ ταῦτα πάντα τοῦ λιμοῦ καταλαβόντος, πάλιν μετανάστης ἐγίνετο καὶ οὐκ ἐθορυβεῖτο, οὐδὲ ἐταράττετο, αλλα τὴν αὐτὴν ὑπακοὴν καὶ φιλοσοφίαν καὶ ὑπομονὴν ἐπεδεικνυτο καὶ κατῆει εἰς Αἴγυπτον καὶ ὑπακούσας τῷ θεῷ τοιαῦτα κελεύοντι ἀφῃρέθη τὴν γυναῖκα καὶ καθυβριζομένην εὥρα, τὸ γε ἦκον εἰς τὸν Αἰγύπτιον καὶ θανάτου χαλεπώτερα ὑπέμενεν ἐν τοῖς καιριωτάτοις πληττόμενος ; Τί γὰρ βαρύτερον ἦν, εἰπέ μοι, τοῦ γυναῖκα νόμῳ γάμου συναφθεῖσαν αὐτῷ μετὰ τοσαῦτα κατορθώματα ὁρᾶν ὑπὸ βαρβαρικῆς ἀκολασίας ἁρπαζομένην, εἰσαγομένην ἔνδον εἰς τὰς βασιλικὰς αὐλάς, καθυβριζομένην ;

6. Εἰ γὰρ καὶ μὴ τὸ ἔργον ἐξέβη, ἀλλ ᾽ αὐτὸς τουτο προσεδόκησε καὶ πάντα ἔφερε γενναίως καὶ οὔτε αἱ συμφοραὶ αὐτὸν ὑπεσκέλισαν, οὔτε αἱ εὐημεριαι ἐφύσησαν · αλλ ᾽ ἐν τῇ τῶν καιρῶν διαφορᾷ ἴσην τὴν ἑαυτοῦ γνώμην διεφύλαττε. Τί δέ, ὅτε αὐτῷ τὸν υἱὸν ἐπηγγείλατο, οὐχὶ μυριὰ κωλυματα ἦν, τὰ ἀπὸ τῶν λογισμῶν ; καὶ πάντα ἐκεῖνα κατευνάσας καὶ τὸν ἐκείνων θόρυβον ἀνελών, ἀπὸ τῆς πίστεως διελαμψεν.

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7. Ὅτε δὲ αὐτὸν καθιερῶσαι ἐκελεύσθη, οὐχὶ μετὰ πολλοῦ τοῦ τάχους, ὡσανεὶ μέλλων εἰς παστάδα ἄγειν καὶ νυμφαγωγεῖν, οὕτως αὐτὸν ἀνήγαγε ; καὶ αὐτῆς τῆς φύσεως σχεδὸν ἐξελθὼν καὶ τοῦ ἄνθρωπος εἶναι ἀπαλλαγεὶς καὶ θυσίαν ἀνέφερε καινήν τινα καὶ παράδοξον καὶ μόνος τὸν ἆθλον ἠθλησε τοῦτον, οὐ γυναικί, οὐκ οἰκέτῃ, οὐκ ἄλλῳ τινὶ τῶν μετ᾽ αὐτοῦ κοινωσάμενος ; 8. Ἤδει γάρ, ᾔδει σαφῶς τοῦ σκοπέλου τὸ ὕψος, τοῦ ἐπιτάγματος τὸν ὄγκον, τοῦ ἀγῶνος τὸ μέγεθος · διὸ μόνος αὐτὸς τὸν δρόμον ἀνεδέξατο τοῦτον καὶ ἔτρεχε καὶ ἠγωνίζετο καὶ ἐστεφανοῦτο καὶ ἀνεκηρύττετο. Ποῖος ταῦτα αὐτὸν ἱερεὺς ἐδίδαξε ; ποῖος δὲ διδάσκαλος ; ποῖος προφήτης ; Οὐδὲ εἷς · ἀλλ᾽ ἐπειδὴ εὐγνώμονα εἶχε ψυχήν, ἤρκεσεν αὐτῷ πρὸς ἅπαντα.

9. Τί δὲ ὁ Νῶε ; Ποῖον ἔσχεν ἱερέα ; ποῖον διδάσκαλον ; ποῖον καθηγητήν ; ὅτε μόνον, τῆς οἰκουμένης ἁπάσης διαφθαρείσης ἐν πονηρίᾳ, τὴν ὀρθὴν ὡδευσεν ὁδὸν καὶ τὴν ἀρετὴν διετήρησε καὶ οὕτω διέλαμψεν, ὡς ἐν τῷ ναυαγίῳ τῆς οἰκουμένης αὐτὸν τε διασωθῆναι καὶ ἑτέρους διὰ τὴν περιουσίαν τῆς οἰκείας ἀρετῆς τῶν ἐπηρτημένων ἐξαρπάσαι κινδύνων ; Πόθεν δίκαιος ἐγένετο ; πόθεν τέλειος ; ποῖον ἱερέα καὶ οὗτος ἢ διδάσκαλον ἐσχηκώς ; Οὐδεὶς ἂν εἰπεῖν ἔχοι.

10. Ὁ δὲ υἱὸς ὁ τούτου, καίτοι ἔνδοξον ἔχων τὸν διδάσκαλον διηνεκῶς, τοῦ πατρὸς τὴν ἀρετὴν καὶ νουθεσίας ἀπολαύων καὶ τῆς διὰ ῥημάτων καὶ τῆς διὰ τῶν ἔργων καὶ τὴν ἀπὸ τῶν πραγμάτων ἔκβασιν ὁρῶν καὶ τὴν ἀπὸ τῆς συμφορᾶς καὶ τὴν ἀπὸ

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τῆς σωτηρίας παραίνεσιν, πονηρὸς περὶ τὸν φύντα ἐγένετο καὶ ἐκωμῴδει τοῦ γεγεννηκότος τὴν γύμνωσιν καὶ ἐξεπόμπευσεν. Ὁρᾷς ὅτι πανταχοῦ ψυχῆς χρεία εὐγνώμονος ;

11. Τί δὲ ὁ Ἰὼβ, εἰπέ μοι ; ποίων προφητῶν ἤκουσε ; ποίας διδασκαλίας ἀπήλαυσεν ; Οὐδεμιᾶς. Ἀλλ᾽ ὅμως καὶ οὗτος οὐδενὸς τούτων τετυχηκὼς καὶ πᾶν ἀρετῆς εἶδος μετὰ πολλῆς ἐπεδείξατο τῆς ἀκριβείας. Καὶ γὰρ κοινὰ τὰ ὄντα τοῖς δεομένοις ἐκέκτητο καὶ οὐχὶ τὰ ὄντα μόνον, ἀλλὰ καὶ αὐτὸ τὸ σῶμα. 12. Τῇ μὲν γὰρ οἰκίᾳ τοὺς ὁδίτας ὑπεδέχετο καὶ ἐκείνων μᾶλλον ἦν ἡ οἰκία ἢ τοῦ κεκτημένου, τῇ δὲ τοῦ σώματος ἰσχύϊ τοῖς ἀδικουμένοις ἤμυνε, τῇ δὲ τῆς γλώττης συνέσει καὶ σοφίᾳ τοὺς ἐπηρεάζοντας ἐπεστόμιζε καὶ τὴν εὐαγγελικὴν πολιτείαν διὰ πάντων διαλάμπουσαν ἐπεδείκνυτο.

13. Σκόπει δὲ · "Μακάριοι οἱ πτωχοὶ τῷ πνεύματι", φησὶν ὁ Χριστός. Τοῦτο αὐτὸς διὰ τῶν ἔργων κατώρθωσεν λέγων. "Εἰ δὲ καὶ ἐφαύλισα, φησί, κρῖμα θεράποντος ἢ θεραπαίνης, κρινομένων αὐτῶν πρός με. Τί γὰρ ποιήσω, ἐὰν ἐπίσκεψίν μου ποιήσῃ ὁ Κύριος ; Πότερον οὐχ ὡς ἐγὼ ἐγενόμην ἐν γαστρὶ καὶ ἐκεῖνοι ἐγένοντο ; Ἐγενόμεθα δὲ ἐν τῇ αὐτῇ κοιλίᾳ. "

"Μακάριοι οἱ πραεῖς, ὅτι αὐτοὶ κληρονομήσουσι τὴν γῆν. " Καὶ τίς πραότερος ἐκείνου γέγονε, περὶ οὗ καὶ οἱ οἰκέται ἔλεγον · "Τίς ἂν δῴη ἡμῖν τῶν σαρκῶν αὐτοῦ ἐμπλησθῆναι; " Οὕτως ἦσαν αὐτοῦ σφοδροὶ ἔρασται.

14. "Μακάριοι οἱ πενθοῦντες, ὅτι αὐτοὶ παρακληθήσονται. " Καὶ οὐδὲ ταύτης ἄμοιρος ἦν τῆς ἀρετῆς. Ἄκουσον γοῦν τι φησιν · "Εἰ δὲ καὶ ἁμαρτὼν ἀκουσίως, διετράπην πολυοχλίαν

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λαοῦ, τοῦ μὴ ἐχαγορεῦσαι τὴν ἀνομίαν μου." Ὁ δὲ οὕτω διακείμενος, εὔδηλον ὅτι αὐτὴν ἐπένθει μετὰ πολλῆς τῆς ὑπερβολῆς.

15. "Μακάριοι οἱ πεινῶντες καὶ διψῶντες τὴν δικαιοσύνην." Ὅρα καὶ τοῦτο μεθ' ὑπερβολῆς αὐτῷ κατωρθωμένον. "Συνέτριψα, φησί, μύλας ἀδίκων καὶ ἐκ μέσου ὀδόντων αὐτῶν ἅρπαγμα ἐξέσπασα", "δικαιοσύνην δὲ ἐνδεδύκειν, ἡμφιασάμην δὲ κρῖμα ἴσα διπλοΐδι." "Μακάριοι οἱ ἐλεήμονες, ὅτι αὐτοὶ ἐλεηθήσονται." Οὗτος δὲ οὐκ ἐν χρήμασι μόνον ἐλεήμων ἦν, οὐδὲ ἐν τῷ ἐνδύειν τοὺς γυμνοὺς καὶ τρέφειν τοὺς πεινῶντας καὶ χηρείαν διορθοῦν καὶ ὀρφανίαν περιστέλλειν καὶ πηρώματα φύσεως παραμυθεῖσθαι, ἀλλὰ καὶ ἐν αὐτῇ τῇ συμπαθείᾳ τῆς ψυχῆς. 16. "Ἐγὼ γάρ, φησίν, ἐπὶ παντὶ ἀδυνάτῳ ἐκλαυσα καὶ ἐστέναξα ἰδὼν ἄνδρα ἐν ἀνάγκαις." Καθάπερ γὰρ κοινὸς ὢν ἁπάντων πατήρ, οὕτω τὰς ἑκάστου συμφοράς, τὰς μὲν διώρθου, τὰς δὲ ἐθρήνει καὶ διὰ ῥημάτων καὶ διὰ πραγμάτων καὶ διὰ συμπαθείας καὶ δακρύων καὶ διὰ παντὸς τρόπου τοὺς ἐν συμφοραῖς ἀνέξων καὶ κοινός τις ἁπάντων λιμὴν γενόμενος.

17. "Μακάριοι οἱ καθαροὶ τῇ καρδίᾳ, ὅτι αὐτοὶ τὸν θεὸν ὄψονται." Καὶ τοῦτο οὐχ ὡς ἔτυχεν αὐτῷ κατώρθωτο. Ἄκουσον γοῦν τοῦ θεοῦ μαρτυροῦντος αὐτῷ · "Οὐκ ἔστιν ἄνθρωπος ὅμοιος αὐτοῦ τῶν ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς, ἄνθρωπος ἄμεμπτος, δίκαιος, ἀληθινός, θεοσεβής, ἀπεχόμενος ἀπὸ παντὸς πονηροῦ πράγματος."

18. "Μακάριοι οἱ δεδιωγμένοι ἕνεκεν δικαιοσύνης, ὅτι αὐτῶν ἐστιν ἡ βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν." Καὶ ἐντεῦθεν πολλὴν τῶν

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ἀγώνων καὶ τῶν βραβείων τὴν δαψίλειαν ἐποιήσατο. Οὐ γὰρ δι᾽ ἀνθρώπων ἠλαύνετο, ἀλλ᾽ αὐτὸς ὁ ἀρχέκακος δαίμων ἐπιθέμενος καὶ πάντα αὐτοῦ τὰ μηχανήματα κινήσας, οὕτως ἦλθεν ἐπ᾽ αὐτὸν, ἀπελάσας αὐτὸν καὶ οἰκίας καὶ πατριδος καὶ εἰς τὴν κοπρίαν ἐξαγαγών, χρημάτων ἐκβαλὼν πάντων, κτημάτων, παίδων, αὐτῆς τοῦ σώματος τῆς ὑγιείας καὶ λιμῷ παραδοὺς χαλεπωτάτῳ · μετὰ δὲ ἐκείνου καὶ τῶν φίλων τινές, οὐχ ὡς ἔτυχεν, ἤλλοντο καὶ ἀνέξαινον αὐτοῦ τῆς ψυχῆς τὰ ἕλκη.

19. "Μακάριοί ἐστε, ὅταν ὀνειδίσωσιν ὑμᾶς καὶ διώξωσι καὶ εἴπωσι πᾶν πονηρὸν ῥῆμα καθ᾽ ὑμῶν ψευδόμενοι, ἕνεκεν ἐμοῦ. Χαίρετε καὶ ἀγαλλιᾶσθε ὅτι ὁ μισθὸς ὑμῶν πολὺς ἐν τοῖς οὐρανοῖς." Ἀλλὰ καὶ τοῦτον μετὰ πολλῆς τῆς ἀφθονίας ἐκαρπώσατο τὸν μακαρισμόν. Καὶ γὰρ διέβαλλον αὐτὸν οἱ παρόντες τότε, ἐλάττονα ὧν ἐπλημμέλησε λέγοντες αὐτὸν τετιμωρῆσθαι, μακρὰς κατηγορίας ἀποτείνοντες κατ᾽ αὐτοῦ καὶ λόγους ψευδεῖς καὶ συκοφαντίας γέμοντας. 20. Ἀλλ᾽ ὅμως καὶ τούτους μέλλοντας κινδυνεύειν ἐξήρπασε τῆς θεηλάτου πληγῆς, ὑπὲρ οὐδενὸς τῶν εἰρημένων μνησικακήσας αὐτοῖς. Καὶ ἐνταῦθα πάλιν ἐκεῖνο ἐπλήρου τὸ παράγγελμα, τὸ · " Ἀγαπᾶτε τοὺς ἐχθροὺς ὑμῶν, εὔχεσθε ὑπὲρ τῶν ἐπηρεαζόντων ὑμᾶς." Καὶ γὰρ ἠγάπησε καὶ ηὔξατο ὑπὲρ αὐτῶν καὶ τὴν ὀργὴν τοῦ θεοῦ ἀνεῖλε καὶ τὴν ἁμαρτίαν αὐτῶν ἔλυσε · καίτοι μὴ προφητῶν, μὴ εὐαγγελιστῶν, μὴ ἱερέων, μὴ διδασκάλου, μὴ ἄλλου τινὸς ἀκούσας ὑπὲρ ἀρετῆς συμβουλεύοντος.

21. Ὁρᾷς ἡλίκον ἐστὶ γενναία ψυχὴ καὶ πῶς ἀρκεῖ πρὸς ἀρετὴν ἑαυτῇ, κἂν μηδεμιᾶς ἐπιμελείας ἀπολαύῃ ; Καίτοι γε

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προγόνους οὐ μόνον χρηστοὺς οὐκ ἔσχεν, ἀλλὰ καὶ πολλὴν κακίαν ἐπιδειξαμένους. Περὶ γοῦν τοῦ προγόνου αὐτοῦ φησιν ὁ Παῦλος · "Μή τις πόρνος ἢ βέβηλος, ὡς Ἠσαῦ, ὃς ἀντὶ βρώσεως μιᾶς ἀπέδοτο τὰ πρωτοτόκια αὐτοῦ."

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Chapter Thirteen

Nothing injures the vigilant or causes them to stumble.

1. Did Abraham benefit from the service of priests? Tell me what you think. What about instruction, or exhortation, or counsel? At that time and place there were no scriptures, no law, no prophets, nor anything else of this kind. Rather, Abraham sailed on an unnavigable ocean and traveled an uncharted path; he himself had been raised in an ungodly home and country. Nevertheless, none of these matters hindered him, but after so long a time -- after the prophets, after the law, after the praiseworthy training Christ was about to provide through signs and wonders -- Abraham anticipated all these things through his own actions; he displayed a genuine and fervent love, a contempt for wealth, and a caring concern for members of his own household. He trampled under foot every vanity; he renounced the soft life and drove it far away from himself, living in a stricter fashion than the monks who have seized the summits of the mountains in our own time. 3. For Abraham had no house, but the shadow of the leaves was a roof and dwelling for this righteous man. Nor, since he was a foreigner, was he thoughtless concerning hospitality, but the foreigner in a foreign land continued to practice this virtue, always ready to welcome and serve those who would

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arrive at mid day. He accomplished this entire work through his own effort and also involved his wife as an associate in this beautiful way of life.

4. What more could Abraham have done on behalf of his nephew, even though Lot did not act in a fair or proper way toward him? Instead, he rushed at the chance to obtain the better part of the land and acted this way after Abraham gave him the opportunity to choose first.[1] Didn't he pour out his blood, didn't he arm his own servants, didn't he place himself in manifest danger? When he was commanded to leave his own home and to go to another land, didn't he immediately obey, having left behind home land, friends, relatives, and everything else; having obeyed the command of the one who ordered him to leave, he abandoned the path of what was clear and comprehensible. He regarded "invisible things" as much more clear than "visible things" because of the promise of God. This was evidence of a fully devoted faith. 5. After the occurrence of the famine, he again became a wanderer. Yet he was neither troubled nor alarmed, but demonstrated the same obedience, spiritual insight, and patient endurance. He went down to Egypt, and even though he continued to obey the God who commanded such things, he was robbed of his wife and saw her being wantonly insulted. Because he had come to Egypt he endured something worse than

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[1] Cf. Genesis 13: 8-12.

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death, as he was wounded in the most critical area. For what was more grievous, tell me, than after such achievements in his moral and spiritual life, to see the wife who had been united to him by the law of marriage ravished by barbaric licentiousness, led into the royal courts, and treated despitefully?[2] 6. For even if the final outcome wasn't like this, Abraham still expected these things to take place, and was bearing all these events nobly. Neither misfortunes upset him, nor did good times puff him up. Rather, in these different circumstances he continually maintained the same outlook. What then? When a son was promised to Abraham, weren't there a thousand obstacles from a strictly human perspective? Having quieted these thoughts, having silenced their clamor, he was radiant in his faith. 7. When Abraham was commanded to sacrifice his son, didn't he lead him up to the mountain with great haste, as though he were leading him to the bridal bed and as if he was guiding the bride from her home to that of the groom? Nearly bursting through the bonds of human nature -- freed from the human condition -- Abraham was offering a new and unexpected sacrifice. And did he not fight this battle alone, apart from the support of his wife, servant, or any of his other acquaintances? For he knew, yes, he clearly recognized the height of the adversity, the importance of

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[2] Cf. Genesis 12: 10-20.

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the command, the greatness of the combat. Therefore, he undertook this course alone; he ran and fought; he was crowned and proclaimed. What priest taught him these things? What teacher? What prophet? Not a single one. But because he had a well-disposed soul, it enabled him to face all these things. 9. What about Noah? What priest did he have? What teacher? What guide? When he was alone and the entire world corrupted by evil, he continued to journey on an upright path and closely followed the life of virtue. He shined so brightly that he was saved in the midst of the shipwreck of the world. Others were saved from imminent danger through the abundance of Noah's virtue. By what means did Noah become righteous? How did he become perfect? What priest or teacher did he have at his disposal? No one would be able to say. 10. But Noah's son, although he constantly had an honored master with him -- the virtue of his father -- and had the benefit of his admonishings, both through his words and through his actions; and although he saw how events had turned out and perceived the lessons to be learned from both misfortune and deliverance,[3] he still acted in an evil manner toward his father: he ridiculed his nakedness and made a public show of

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[3] Malingrey sees here an allusion to the Flood; cf. Jean Chrysostome, *Sur la Providence de Dieu*, introduction, texte critique, traduction, et notes de A.M. Malingrey, Sources Chrétiennes, No. 79, (Paris: Les Éditions du Cerf, 1961), 195, note 1.

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him. Do you see that it is necessary to have a well-disposed soul in all circumstances?

11. Tell me what you think about Job. What prophets did he listen to? What teachers did he profit from? None. But even though he had none of these, he demonstrated every kind of virtue with great exactness. For he shared the possessions he had acquired with those in need, and not only what he owned, but even his physical strength itself. He was always welcoming wayfarers into his home. His house was more theirs than his. At the same time he defended those who were unjustly wronged with his physical strength, and muzzled the insolent with the intelligence and wisdom of his speech. The conduct of a Christian shined brightly in all his actions. 13. Now consider this. Christ says: "Blessed are the poor in spirit."[4] Job realized this way of life through his actions, saying: "If I made light of a matter brought to me for justice by my servant or handmaid when they were disputing with me. . . . What will I do if the Lord should make a close inquiry about me? Was I not formed within the womb? Were they not formed in the same way? We were both formed within the same womb."[5] "Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth."[6] And who was more gentle than Job, concerning whom his servants said: "Who

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[4] Matthew 5: 3

[5] Job 31: 13-15

[6] Matthew 5: 5

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would give us his own meat to satisfy our hunger."[7] Such was their fervent love for him. 14. "Blessed are they who mourn, for they shall be comforted."[8] Job was not bereft of this virtue. Therefore, listen to what he says: "If I sinned involuntarily, I turned myself away from the crowd so my iniquity would not be divulged publicly."[9] It is clear that one disposed to act this way lamented his sin tremendously. 15. "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst after righteousness."[10] Note with what exactness Job acheives this: "I crushed the molars of the unjust and plucked out their prey from between their teeth."[11] "I had put on righteousness. I was clothed with righteous judgment, as with a double-cloak."[12] "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall be shown mercy."[13] Job was not only merciful because he possessed great material wealth -- clothing the naked, feeding the hungry, restoring the widow, protecting the orphan, relieving the infirmities of nature with soothing words -- but his own soul was filled with compassion for the

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[7] Job 31: 31

[8] Matthew 5: 4

[9] Job 31: 33-34

[10] Matthew 5: 6

[11] Job 29: 17

[12] Job 29: 14

[13] Matthew 5: 7

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suffering. 16. "For I wept over all the weak and groaned when I saw someone in need."[14] Just as if he was the common father of all, he faced the misfortunes of each person; he restored the fortunes of some and wept over the misfortunes of others. Through words, actions, compassion, tears, and every possible means, he upheld those in difficult circumstances and became a kind of mutual refuge for everyone. 17. "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God."[15] Even this blessing was realized for Job in a remarkable way. Indeed, listen to God bearing witness to him: "There is not a person like him among all the people of the earth -- a person who is blameless, righteous, genuine, devout, abstaining from every evil thing."[16] 18. "Blessed are those who are persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."[17] This blessing created an abundance of combats and rewards for Job. For he was not harassed by other people. Rather, it was the demon, the author of evil himself, who attacked him. Having set in motion all his subtle devices, he sprang to the attack. He drove him away from home and country and out

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[14] Job 30: 25

[15] Matthew 5: 8

[16] Job 2: 3

[17] Matthew 5: 10

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on to the dung hill, removed all his money, possessions, children, even his bodily health, and delivered him over to the most cruel hunger. After the attacks of the demon there were certain of his friends who, in a premeditated fashion, sprang upon him and tore open the wounds of his soul. 19. "Blessed are you, when they reproach you and persecute you and lying, say every kind of evil thing about you because of me. Rejoice and be glad, for great is your reward in heaven."[18] Job enjoyed this blessing in great abundance. For his friends were falsely accusing him, saying that the severity of his punishment did not match the gravity of his transgressions. They inveighed against him with a long condemnation, one filled with lies and false accusations. 20. Nevertheless, when these same people were on the verge of danger Job snatched them away from the blow sent by God, and did not bear any ill will against them because of what they had said. Here again Job was living out the commandment: "Love your enemies; pray for those who persecute you."[19] Indeed, he loved and honored them, diverted the wrath of God and did away with their sin. And yet Job had not heard prophets, nor evangelists, nor priests, nor any teacher, or any other person giving counsel concerning

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[18] Matthew 5: 11-12a

[19] Matthew 5: 44

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the cultivation of virtue. 21. Do you see how noble his soul is, how it suffices in itself with regard to virtue, even if it should not receive care and cultivation from another? And yet Job did have ancestors who not only were not good-natured and kind, but proved to be quite evil. Indeed, Paul writes concerning Job's ancestor: "See that no one is sexually immoral, or is godless like Esau, who for a single meal sold his inheritance rights as the oldest son."[20]

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[20] Hebrews 12: 16

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Κεφ. ιδ΄. Ὅτι καὶ ἐπὶ τῶν ἀποστόλων πολλὰ τὰ σκάνδαλα καὶ πολλοὶ οὐ παρασυρόμενοι καὶ διδασκάλων διώξεις καὶ ἀναιρέσεις ταχεῖαι

1. Τί δέ, ἐπὶ τῶν ἀποστόλων, εἰπέ μοι ; οὐ μυριά τοιαῦτα ἐγίνετο ; Ἄκουσον γοῦν τί φησιν ὁ Παῦλος · "Οἶδας τοῦτο ὅτι ἀπεστράφησάν με πάντες οἱ ἐν τῇ Ἀσίᾳ, ὧν ἐστι Φύγελλος καὶ Ἑρμογένης." Οὐ δεσμωτήρια ᾤκουν οἱ διδάσκαλοι ; οὐχ ἁλύσεις περιέκειντο ; οὐ παρὰ τῶν οἰκείων, οὐ παρὰ τῶν ἀλλοτρίων τὰ ἔσχατα ἔπασχον κακά ; οὐ μετ᾽ ἐκείνους αὖτ᾽ ἐκείνων λύκοι βαρεῖς εἰσῄεσαν εἰς τὰ ποίμνια ; οὐχὶ ταῦτα προὔλεγεν ὁ Παῦλος Ἐφεσίοις εἰς Μίλητον αὐτοὺς μεταπεμψάμενος ; 2. "Ἐγὼ γὰρ οἶδα, φησίν, ὅτι εἰσελεύσονται μετὰ τὴν ἄφιξίν μου λύκοι βαρεῖς εἰς ὑμᾶς, μὴ φειδόμενοι τοῦ ποιμνίου. Καὶ ἐξ ὑμῶν δὲ αὐτῶν ἀναστήσονται ἄνδρες λαλοῦντες διεστραμμένα, τοῦ ἀποσπᾶν τοὺς μαθητὰς ὀπίσω αὐτῶν." Οὐ χαλκοτύπος ἀνὴρ Ἀλέξανδρος μυριά παρεσχεν αὐτῷ πράγματα, πανταχόθεν ἐλαύνων, πολεμῶν, πυκτεύων καὶ εἰς τοσαύτην αὐτὸν κατέστησεν ἀγωνίαν ὡς καὶ τῷ μαθητῇ παραγγεῖλαι καὶ εἰπεῖν · "Ὃν καὶ σὺ φυλάσσου · λιάν γὰρ ἀνθέστηκε τοῖς ἡμετέροις λόγοις" ;

3. Οὐχ ὁλόκληρον ἔθνος τῶν Γαλατῶν ὑπό τινων ψευδαδέλφων διεφθάρη ; Οὐκ ἐν προοιμίοις τοῦ κηρύγματος ὁ Στέφανος ὑπὲρ τοὺς ποταμοὺς ῥέων καὶ πάντας ἐπιστομίζων, ὁ τὰς ἀναισχύντους ἀποφράττων Ἰουδαίων γλώττας, ᾧ οὐδεὶς ἀντιστῆναι ἠδύνατο, ὁ πάντα συγχὺς τὰ Ἰουδαϊκά, ὁ λαμπρὸν

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στήσας τρόπαιον καὶ νίκην περιφανῆ,

4. ὁ γενναῖος οὗτος καὶ σοφὸς καὶ χάριτος πεπληρωμένος καὶ τοσαύτην ἐκκλησίαν ὠφελῶν, οὐδὲ πολὺν χρόνον ποιήσας ἐν τῷ κηρύγματι, ἀθρόον ἡρπάγη καὶ ὡς βλάσφημος κατεδικάζετο καὶ κατελεύετο ; Τί δαὶ Ἰάκωβος ; οὐκ ἐν ἀρχῇ καὶ αὐτὸς καὶ ἐξ αὐτῆς, ὡς εἰπεῖν, βαλβῖδος ἀνεσπάσθη καὶ ἀποτμηθεὶς εἰς χάριν τῶν Ἰουδαίων ὑπὸ Ἡρώδου, οὕτω τὸν βιὸν κατέλυσε, στῦλος τοιοῦτος καὶ ἑδραίωμα τηλικοῦτον τῆς ἀληθείας ;

5. Πόσοι τότε ἐσκανδαλίζοντο γινομένων τούτων ; Ἀλλ' οἱ ἑστῶτες ἵσταντο καὶ μειζόνων ἵσταντο. Ἄκουσον γοῦν τί φησιν ὁ Παῦλος Φιλιππησίοις ἐπιστέλλων · "Γινώσκειν δὲ ὑμᾶς βούλομαι, ἀδελφοί ὅτι τὰ κατ' ἐμὲ μᾶλλον εἰς προκοπὴν τοῦ Εὐαγγελίου ἐλήλυθεν, ὥστε τοὺς πλείονας τῶν ἀδελφῶν ἐν Κυρίῳ, πεποιθότας τοῖς δεσμοῖς μου, περισσοτέρως τολμᾶν ἀφόβως τὸν λόγον τοῦ θεοῦ λαλεῖν. "

6. Εἶδες ἀνδρείαν ; εἶδες παρρησίαν ; εἶδες εὐτονίαν ψυχῆς ; εἶδες φιλόσοφον γνώμην ; Ἑώρων τὸν διδάσκαλον ἐν δεσμωτηρίῳ καὶ ἁλύσει συγκεκλεισμένον, ἀγχόμενον, παιόμενον καὶ μυρία πάσχοντα δεινὰ καὶ οὐ μόνον οὐκ ἐσκανδαλιζοντο, οὐδὲ ἐθορυβοῦντο, ἀλλὰ καὶ μείζονα προθυμίαν ἐκτῶντο καὶ πλείονα προκοπὴν εἰς τοὺς ἀγῶνας ἐλάμβανον τοῦ διδασκάλου τοῖς παθήμασιν.

7. Ἀλλὰ καὶ ὑπεσύροντο, φησίν, ἕτεροι. Ναὶ οὐδὲ ἐγὼ πρὸς τοῦτο ἀντιλέγω · καὶ γὰρ εἰκὸς πολλοὺς καὶ ὑποσύρεσθαι, γινομένων τούτων · ἀλλ', ὃ πολλάκις εἶπον καὶ λέγων οὐ παύσομαι, τοῦτο καὶ νῦν ἐρῶ · ἑαυτοῖς δίκαιοι τοῦτο ἂν εἶεν

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λογίζεσθαι οὗτοι, οὐ τῇ τῶν πραγμάτων φύσει. Καὶ γὰρ ἀπιὼν ὁ Χριστὸς ἐντεῦθεν ταύτην κατέλιπεν ἡμῖν τὴν κληρονομίαν λέγων · "Ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ θλῖψιν ἕξετε" καὶ " Ἐπὶ ἡγεμόνας καὶ βασιλέας ἀχθήσεσθε" καὶ, " Ἔσται καιρὸς ὅτε πᾶς ὁ ἀποκτείνας ὑμᾶς δόξει λατρείαν προσφέρειν τῷ θεῷ". Ὥστε περιττῶς μοι τοὺς σκανδαλιζομένους πανταχοῦ προφέρεις · ἀεὶ γὰρ ταῦτα συνέβαινε.

8. Καὶ τί λέγω τὰ τῶν ἀποστόλων ; Πόσοι τῷ σταυρῷ αὐτοῦ τοῦ κοινοῦ πάντων ἡμῶν Δεσπότου ἐσκανδαλίσθησαν καὶ παρανομώτεροι καὶ θρασύτεροι μᾶλλον ἐγένοντο καὶ παριόντες ἐκωμῴδουν αὐτόν, λέγοντες. " Ὁ καταλύων τὸν ναὸν καὶ ἐν τρισὶν ἡμέραις ἐγείρων αὐτὸν ἄλλους ἔσωσεν, ἑαυτὸν οὐ δύναται σῶσαι ; Εἰ Υἱὸς εἶ τοῦ θεοῦ, καταβηθι ἀπὸ τοῦ σταυροῦ καὶ πιστεύσομεν εἰς σέ." 9. Ἀλλ ' Ὁ γὰρ λῃστὴς ἁπάντων κατηγορεῖ τῶν τοιούτων. Καὶ γὰρ καὶ ἐκεῖνος ἐσταυρωμένον εἶδεν ἄνω καὶ οὐ μόνον οὐκ ἐσκανδαλίσθη, ἀλλα καὶ ἐντεῦθεν μείζονα ὑπόθεσιν ἔλαβεν εἰς τὸ φιλοσοφῆσαι καὶ πάντα ὑπερβὰς τὰ ἀνθρώπινα καὶ τῷ πτερῷ τῆς πίστεως κουφισθείς, περὶ τῶν μελλόντων ἐφιλοσόφει.

10. Ὁρῶν γὰρ ἀνεσκολοπισμένον, μεμαστιγωμένον, ὑβριζόμενον, χολὴν ποτιζόμενον, ἐμπτυόμενον, ὑπὸ δήμου τοσούτου χλευαζόμενον, ὑπὸ δικαστηρίου κατακριθέντα, τὴν ἐπὶ θάνατον ἀπαχθέντα, οὐδενὶ τούτων ἐσκανδαλίσθη · τοσαύτην γινομένην ὑπὸ τοῦ πλήθους τοῦ διεφθαρμένου, τὴν ὀρθὴν οδὸν αὐτὸς ἐβάδισε λέγων · "Μνήσθητί μου ἐν τῇ βασιλείᾳ σου"

11. καὶ τὸν κατηγοροῦντα ἐπεστόμιζε καὶ τὰ οἰκεῖα

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ἁμαρτήματα ἐξωμολογεῖτο καὶ περὶ ἀναστάσεως ἐφιλοσόφει · καὶ ταῦτα οὐ νεκροὺς ἰδὼν ἐγειρομένους, οὐ λεπροὺς καθαιρομένους, οὐ χωλοὺς διορθουμένους, οὐ θάλατταν χαλινουμένην, οὐ δαίμονας ἐλαυνομένους, οὐκ ἄρτους πηγάζοντας, οὐ τὰ ἄλλα, ἅπερ ἐθεάσατο τῶν Ἰουδαίων ὁ δῆμος καὶ θεασάμενος ἐσταύρωσεν. 12. Ἀλλ᾽ οὗτος μὲν ἀνεσκολοπισμένον ἰδὼν καὶ ὡμολόγησε θεὸν καὶ βασιλείας ἐμνημόνευσε καὶ περὶ τῶν μελλόντων ἐφιλοσόφησεν · ἐκεῖνοι δὲ θαυματουργοῦντα θεασάμενοι καὶ τῆς διὰ λόγων καὶ τῆς διὰ πραγμάτων ἀπολαύσαντες διδασκαλίας, οὐ μόνον οὐδὲν ἀπώναντο, ἀλλὰ καὶ εἰς τὸ ἔσχατον βάραθρον τῆς ἀπωλείας κατηνέχθησαν, ἐπὶ τὸν σταυρὸν αὐτὸν ἀναβιβάσαντες.

13. Ὁρᾷς ὅτι οἱ μὲν ἀγνώμονες καὶ ἠμελημένοι, οὐδὲ ἀπὸ τῶν ὠφελούντων κερδαίνουσιν · οἱ δὲ εὐγνώμονες καὶ νήφοντες ἀφ᾽ ὧν ἕτεροι σκανδαλίζονται, ἀπὸ τούτων τὰ μέγιστα ὠφελοῦνται ; Τοῦτο καὶ ἐπὶ τοῦ Ἰούδα καὶ ἐπὶ τοῦ Ἰωβ ἔστιν ἰδεῖν. Ὁ μὲν γὰρ Ἰούδας οὐδὲ ἀπὸ τοῦ Χριστοῦ τοῦ τὴν οἰκουμένην διορθώσαντος ἐσώθη · Ὁ δὲ Ἰὼβ οὐδὲ ἀπὸ τοῦ διαβόλου τοῦ τοσούτους ἀπολέσαντος ἐβλάβη. 14. Ἀλλ᾽ ὁ μὲν μυριὰ παθῶν κακὰ ἐστεφανοῦτο · ἐκεῖνος δὲ, ὁ σημεῖα θεασάμενος καὶ αὐτὸς ποιήσας, ὁ νεκροὺς ἐγείρας καὶ δαίμονας ἐλάσας --- καὶ γὰρ καὶ αὐτὸς ταύτην εἴληφε τὴν ἐξουσίαν, --- ὁ μυριὰ περὶ βασιλείας καὶ γεέννης ἀκούσας, ὁ τραπέζης κοινωνήσας μυστικῆς, ὁ δείπνου μετασχὼν φρικωδεστάτου καὶ τοσαύτης ἀπολαύσας εὐνοίας καὶ προνοίας, ὅσης Πέτρος καὶ Ἰάκωβος καὶ Ἰωάννης, μᾶλλον δὲ καὶ πολλῷ πλείονος · 15. μετὰ γὰρ τῆς

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ἄλλης ἐπιμελείας καὶ τῆς συγκαταβάσεως, ἧς μετέσχε πολλῆς καὶ τὰ χρήματα τῶν πενήτων ἐγχειρισθεὶς ἦν · τότε οὗτος μετὰ τοσαῦτα ἐξεβακχεύθη καὶ τὸν Σατανᾶν ὑποδεξάμενος διὰ τῆς φιλαργυρίας, εἰς τὴν ἑαυτοῦ διάνοιαν ἐγένετο προδότης καὶ τὸ κεφάλαιον εἰργάσατο τῶν κακῶν, αἷμα τοιοῦτον πωλήσας τριάκοντα ἀργυρίων καὶ φιλήματι δολίῳ προδοὺς τὸν Δεσπότην. 16. Πόσους οἶει καὶ ἐν τούτῳ σκανδαλισθῆναι, τῷ παρὰ τοῦ μαθητοῦ γενέσθαι τὴν προδοσίαν ; Τί δαὶ ὁ τῆς ἐρήμου πολίτης, ὁ τῆς στείρας καρπός, ὁ τοῦ Ζαχαρίου παῖς, ὁ τὴν ἁγίαν ἐκείνην καὶ φρικώδη καταξιωθεὶς βαπτίσαι κεφαλὴν καὶ γενέσθαι πρόδρομος τοῦ οἰκείου Δεσπότου, ὅτε δεσμωτήριον ᾤκει, ὅτε ἀπετέμνετο καὶ πορνικῆς ὀρχήσεως σφαγὴ μισθὸς ἐγίνετο, πόσους οἶει σκανδαλίζεσθαι τότε ; 17. Καὶ τί λέγω τότε ; Πόσοι νῦν μετὰ χρόνον τοσοῦτον ταῦτα ἀκούοντες σκανδαλίζονται ; Καὶ τί λέγω τὸν Ἰωάννην καὶ τὸ δεσμωτήριον καὶ τὴν σφαγὴν ἐκείνην καὶ περὶ τοὺς οἰκέτας ἀναστρέφομαι, δέον πάλιν ἐπὶ τὸν Δεσπότην καταφυγεῖν ;

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Chapter Fourteen

In the time of the apostles there were many troubling events. Scores of people were dragged away, and many of the church's leaders suffered persecution and rapid execution.

1. Tell me, then, what was happening in the time of the apostles? Were there not thousands of such things taking place? Listen to what Paul says: "For you know that everyone in Asia has deserted me, among whom are Phygelus and Hermogenes."[1] Were not the teachers of the church living in prisons? Were they not clad with chains? Did they not suffer the worst evils, from close relations and from strangers? Did not fierce wolves enter the flock after them and take their place of leadership? Did Paul not speak about all these things to the Ephesians after he had summoned them to Miletus? 2. "For I know," he says, "that after my departure fierce wolves will enter in among you, not sparing the flock. And out of your own midst will arise men speaking depraved things in order to lead astray the disciples after them."[2] Did not Alexander the coppersmith cause a thousand problems for Paul?[3] Attacking from all sides, warring, assailing Paul with blows, he instigated

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[1] 2 Timothy 1: 15

[2] Acts 20: 29-30

[3] Cf. 2 Timothy 4: 14.

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such a struggle against him that Paul exhorts his disciple and says: "And protect yourself from him. For he has adamantly opposed our words."[4] 3. Were not the Galatians corrupted by some false brothers? When the gospel was first preached, Stephen -- whose speech flowed more freely than rivers -- silencing everyone, cutting short the shameless tongues of the Jews -- whom no one was able to oppose -- confounding all Jewish points of view, who set up a brilliant trophy and manifest victory, 4. this one, noble, wise, and filled with grace, a helper for such a great church -- although it had not been a long time since he had been appointed to the preaching of the gospel -- was he not suddenly seized, condemned, and stoned to death as a blasphemer? What about James? Was it not at the beginning and at the very start, so to speak, that he was overthrown and beheaded by Herod as a favor to the Jews? James ends his life this way, he who was such a pillar and foundation of the truth? 5. How many people at that time stumbled in their faith before the occurrence of these events? Instead, those who were standing in faith stayed on their feet and continued to do so. Listen to what Paul says when he writes to the Philippians: "For I want you to know, brothers, that what has happened to me has rather come for the progress of the gospel, so that the greater part of the brothers in the

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[4] 2 Timothy 4: 15

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Lord, encouraged by my bonds, are even more bold to fearlessly speak the word of God."[5] Do you see the courage? Do you recognize the boldness? Do you perceive the spiritual perspective of a Christian? The Philippians saw their teacher in prison, wrapped in chains, throttled, hit hard, and suffering a thousand hardships; not only were they not shocked or troubled, but they acquired an even greater zeal. The sufferings of their teacher fueled their own progress in the conflict. 7. One might reply, "Others were dragged down by these events." Yes, I would not dispute this. For it is probable that many people would be tripped up by these kinds of events. But, as I have often said and will not cease saying, I will also affirm at this present juncture: the people who stumble over these occurrences would be more correct in reckoning their stumbling to themselves, and not to the nature of the events. That is, when Christ departed from this earth, he left behind this inheritance to us, saying: "In the world you will have tribulation";[6] "You will be led before governors and kings,"[7] and "There will be a time when everyone who kills

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[5] Cf. Philippians 1: 12-14.

[6] John 16: 33b

[7] Matthew 10: 18

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you will think he is offering a sacrifice to God."[8] So you are trying to say too much when you continually bring forward the fact that there are everywhere those who stumble over life's events, for these things have always been happening. 8. And why should I speak about the sufferings of the apostles? How many stumbled over the cross of our Master -- a cross shared by all of us -- and became even more lawless and insolent? As they passed by the cross they ridiculed him, saying: "The one who destroys the temple and raises it in three days -- he saved others. Can't he save himself? If you are the son of God, come down from the cross and we will believe in you."[9]

9. Nevertheless, these people have no excuse because of the scandal of the cross. Indeed, the thief on the cross condemns these kinds of people; for he saw Christ crucified and not only did not stumble in his faith, but in the event of the crucifixion received a greater reason to think like a Christian. Having moved beyond all human speculations, he was lifted up by the wings of faith, and meditated on the things of the future.[10]

10. He saw Christ crucified, whipped, insulted, drinking

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[8] John 16: 2b

[9] Cf. Matthew 27: 40, 42.

[10] The Good Thief; cf. Lk. 23: 40-43.

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gall, spit upon, mocked by so many people, condemned by the court, led away to death, and yet he wasn't shocked by any of these events. But as he saw the cross, the nails driven in, Christ as the subject of such mockery from the corrupt crowd, the thief himself walked the straight road, saying: "Remember me in your kingdom."[11]

11. He muzzled the mouth of the other thief who was accusing Christ, confessed his own sins, and pondered the resurrection. He did these things without having seen the dead raised, lepers cleansed, the lame healed, the sea calmed, demons driven out, loaves produced in abundance, or any of the other events which the Jews witnessed -- and who after seeing them still went ahead and crucified Christ.

12. The thief, however, having seen him crucified confessed God, remembered his kingdom, and reflected on the things of the future. Those others, though, after beholding the working of miracles and enjoying his teaching -- both through his words and his actions -- not only had no use for what he taught, but were brought down to the deepest pit of destruction, having raised him up on the cross. 13. You see, then, that the senseless and negligent gain nothing from the things which are beneficial. Those, however, who have a right disposition and are vigilant derive a tremendous profit from those things which scandalize others.

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[11] Luke 23: 42

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We see this in the case of both Judas and Job. While Judas was not saved by Christ, who had set right the world, Job was not harmed by the devil, who had utterly destroyed so very many. 14. Job, who suffered so many evils, was crowned. Judas, who had seen signs and produced them himself, who had raised the dead, who had driven off demons -- for he had received this authority -- who had heard so much concerning the kingdom and gehenna, who had shared in the table of mystery, who had partook of the eucharist which evokes such reverential awe, who had enjoyed the same affection and providential care as Peter, James, and John, and even much more -- 15. for besides the attention and consideration he shared to such a great extent, he was entrusted with the possessions of the poor. Then, after experiencing so many blessings, Judas was seized with madness. Having welcomed Satan because of his love for money, he became a betrayer in his intentions and carried out the worst of his evil deeds -- he sold such blood for thirty pieces of silver and betrayed the Master with a treacherous kiss. 16. How many do you suppose were thrown off their feet by an event such as this, by the betrayal which came at the hand of a disciple? And what about the citizen of the wilderness, the fruit of the sterile womb, the son of Zechariah, the one deemed worthy to baptize that holy and awe-inspiring head and to become the forerunner of his own master? When John was living in prison, when he was

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cut off and his murder became the price of a lascivious dance, how many do you think were shocked at that time? 17. And why do I say, "at that time"? For even after such a long time many stumble in their faith when they hear of these things. And why speak about John, the prison, and the murder? Why do I meditate on the servants when it is necessary to betake ourselves to the Master?

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Κεφ. ιε΄. Ὅτι οἱ ἀνόητοι καὶ ἀπὸ τοῦ κεφαλαίου τῶν ἀγαθῶν τοῦ σταυροῦ λέγω δι᾽ οὗ ἡ οἰκουμένη ἐσώθη ἐσκανδαλίσθησαν

1. Ὁ γὰρ σταυρὸς τοῦ Χριστοῦ, ὁ τὴν οἰκουμένην ὀρθώσας, ὁ τὴν πλάνην λύσας, ὁ τὴν γῆν ποιήσας οὐρανόν, ὁ τοῦ θανάτου τὰ νεῦρα ἐκκόψας, ὁ τὸν ᾅδην ἄχρηστον ἐργασάμενος, ὁ τοῦ διαβόλου τὴν ἀκρόπολιν καταλύσας, ὁ τοὺς δαίμονας ἐπιστομίσας, ὁ τοὺς ἀνθρώπους ἀγγέλους ποιήσας, ὁ βωμοὺς καταλύσας καὶ ναοὺς ἀνατρέψας, ὁ τὴν καινὴν ταύτην καὶ ξένην φιλοσοφίαν εἰς τὴν γῆν καταφυτεύσας, ὁ μυρία ἐργασάμενος ἀγαθά, τὰ φρικώδη ταῦτα καὶ μεγάλα καὶ ὑψηλά, οὐχὶ σκάνδαλον πολλοῖς γέγονεν ; 2. Οὐχὶ Παῦλος βοᾷ καθ᾽ ἑκάστην ἡμέραν λέγων, καὶ οὐκ αἰσχύνεται ; "Ἡμεῖς δὲ κηρύσσομεν Χριστὸν ἐσταυρωμένον, Ἰουδαίοις μὲν σκάνδαλον, ἔθνεσι δὲ μωρίαν ;" Τί οὖν, εἰπέ μοι ; οὐκ ἐχρῆν γενέσθαι τὸν σταυρόν, οὐδὲ τὴν φρικώδη ἐκείνην ἀνενεχθῆναι θυσίαν, οὐδὲ τοσαῦτα τελεσθῆναι κατορθώματα, ἐπειδὴ σκάνδαλον ἐγένετο τοῖς ἀπολλυμένοις τὸ πρᾶγμα καὶ τότε καὶ μετὰ ταῦτα καὶ παρὰ πάντα τὸν χρόνον ; 3. Καὶ τίς οὕτω μαινόμενος, τίς οὕτως ἐξεστηκὼς ὡς τοῦτο εἰπεῖν ; Ὥσπερ οὖν ἐνταῦθα οὐ τοὺς σκανδαλιζομένους δεῖ λογίζεσθαι, καίτοι τοσούτους ὄντας, ἀλλὰ τοὺς σωθέντας, τοὺς κατορθώσαντας, τοὺς ἀπολαύσαντας τῆς τοσαύτης σοφίας · καὶ οὐ χρὴ λέγειν "Τί δὲ πρὸς τοὺς σκανδαλισθέντας ;" ἑαυτοῖς γὰρ ἂν εἶεν ἐκεῖνοι δίκαιοι λογίζεσθαι · οὕτω δὴ οὐδὲ νυν. 4. Τὸ γὰρ σκάνδαλον οὐ παρὰ τὴν φύσιν τοῦ σταυροῦ γέγονεν, ἀλλὰ παρὰ τὴν ἄνοιαν τῶν σκανδαλιζομένων · διὸ καὶ ἐπάγει ὁ

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Παῦλος · "Αὐτοῖς δὲ τοῖς κλητοῖς, Ἰουδαίοις τε καὶ Ἕλλησι, Χριστὸν θεοῦ δύναμιν καὶ θεοῦ σοφίαν". Ἐπει καὶ ὁ ἥλιος βλάπτει τοὺς ἀσθενεῖς τῶν ὀφθαλμῶν, τί οὖν ; οὐκ ἐδει γενέσθαι τὸν ἥλιον ; Καὶ τὸ μέλι πικρὸν τοῖς νοσοῦσι φαίνεται, τί οὖν ; ἀφανισθῆναι ἔδει τοῦτο ἐκ τοῦ μέσου ; Αὐτοὶ δὲ οἱ ἀπόστολοι, οὐχὶ τοῖς μὲν ὀσμὴ θανάτου εἰς θάνατον ἦσαν, τοῖς δὲ ὀσμὴ ζωῆς εἰς ζωήν ; Διὰ τοὺς ἀπολλυμένους οὖν οὐκ ἔδει τοὺς ζῶντας ἀπολαῦσαι τῆς τοσαύτης κηδεμονίας ;

5. Αὕτη δὲ ἡ παρουσία τοῦ Χριστοῦ, ἡ σωτηρία ἡ ἡμετέρα, ἡ πηγὴ τῶν ἀγαθῶν, ἡ ζωή, τὰ μυρία καλά, πόσους εβάρησε, πόσους ἀπολογίας ἀπεστέρησε καὶ συγγνώμης ; Οὐκ ἀκούεις τί φησι περὶ τῶν Ἰουδαίων ὁ Χριστός ; "Εἰ μὴ ἦλθον καὶ ἐλάλησα αὐτοῖς, ἁμαρτίαν οὐκ εἶχον · νῦν δὲ πρόφασιν οὐκ ἔχουσι περὶ τῆς ἁμαρτίας αὐτῶν." 6. Τί οὖν ; ἐπειδὴ ἀναπολόγητα αὐτοῖς γέγονε μετὰ τὴν παρουσίαν τὰ ἁμαρτήματα, οὐκ ἔδει αὐτὸν παραγενέσθαι δι ' ἐκείνους τοὺς κακῶς τῷ καλῷ χρησαμένους ; Καὶ τίς ἂν ταῦτα εἶποι ; Οὐδεὶς οὐδὲ τῶν σφόδρα ἐξεστηκότων. Τί δαί, ἀπὸ τῶν Γραφῶν, εἰπέ μοι, πόσοι ἐσκανδαλίσθησαν ; πόσαι αἱρέσεις ἐντεῦθεν ἔτεκον ἑαυταῖς προφάσεις ; Ἐξαλειφθῆναι οὖν ἔδει τὰς Γραφὰς διὰ τοὺς σκανδαλισθέντας ἢ μηδὲ τὴν ἀρχὴν δοθῆναι ; Οὐδαμῶς · ἀλλὰ καὶ σφόδρα δοθῆναι διὰ τοὺς μέλλοντας καρποῦσθαι τὴν ἀπ ' αὐτῶν ὠφέλειαν. 7. Ἐκεῖνοι μὲν γάρ -- πάλιν οὐ παύσομαι τὰ αὐτὰ λέγων -- ἑαυτοῖς λογιζέσθωσαν τὰ σκάνδαλα · οἱ δὲ μέλλοντες ἐξ αὐτῶν τὰ μέγιστα ὠφελεῖσθαι, οὐ τὴν τυχοῦσαν

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ὑπέμειναν ἂν ζημίαν, εἰ διὰ τὴν ἑτέρων ἀγνωμοσύνην καὶ ῥᾳθυμίαν αὐτοὶ μέλλοντες κερδαίνειν τῷ λαβεῖν αὐτάς, ἀπεστερήθησαν τῆς τοιαύτης ὠφελείας. Μὴ τοίνυν μοι λέγε τοὺς ἀπολλυμένους · ὅπερ γὰρ καὶ ἐν τῷ ἔμπροσθεν εἶπον λόγῳ, οὐδεὶς τῶν ἑαυτοὺς μὴ ἀδικούντων παρ ' ἑτέρων ἀδικεῖται ποτε, κἂν εἰς αὐτὸ τὸ ζῆν κινδυνεύῃ.

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Chapter Fifteen

Senseless people were scandalized by the foremost good, that is to say, the cross through which the world was saved.

1. Did not the cross of Christ, which has restored the world, which has put an end to error, which has made heaven out of earth, which has destroyed the powers of death, which has made hell useless, which has demolished the devil's citadel, which has gagged the mouth of demons, which has created angels out of human beings, which has destroyed altars and overthrown temples, which has planted this new and marvellous Christian way of life on the earth, which has produced a thousand goods -- these awe-inspiring, great, and lofty benefits, become a stumbling block for many?
2. Doesn't Paul daily proclaim this and is not ashamed to do so, saying: "For we preach Christ crucified, a scandal to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles."[1] What, then, will you say? Should the event of the cross not have occurred, nor that awe-inspiring sacrifice have been offered, nor these wonderful events have been accomplished, because the cross has become a stumbling block to those who are perishing, both for those who lived then and those who followed after, indeed for those of every time? 3. And who would be so

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[1] 1 Corinthians 1: 23

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foolish, who would be so beside himself to actually say this? Therefore, just as it is not necessary to take into account those who were then scandalized, even though they be so many, so we should focus on those who have been saved, those who have been established in the virtuous life, those who have enjoyed the benefit of such wisdom. It is not necessary to say: "What about those who have been scandalized?" For those who stumbled before the event of the cross would be more correct in reckoning their problem to themselves. It is exactly the same case now.
4. For the stumbling block does not arise from the nature of the cross, but rather from the folly of those who are scandalized. This is why Paul adds: "But to those who are called, to both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God."[2] Since the sun harms weak eyes, what then? Ought there not to have been a sun because of this? Honey seems to be bitter to those who are sick. What then? Should honey vanish from our lives because of this? And what about the apostles themselves? Were they not an aroma of death leading to death for some, and an aroma of life leading to life for others? Ought those who are living not to have had the benefit of such care because of those who are perishing? 5. The appearance itself of Christ, our own salvation, the source of good things, the life, and a

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[2] 1 Corinthians 1: 24

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thousand beautiful things -- it was a burden to how many people? How many excuses and pardons did it take away? Don't you hear what Christ says to the Jews? "If I had not come and spoken to them, they would not be guilty of sin. But now they have no excuse concerning their sin."[3] 6. What should we conclude? Because their sins became inexcusable after his coming, ought he never to have come because of those who would fail to benefit from this good? Indeed, who would say such things? Nobody, not even someone out of his mind. What then? Tell me, how many people have been offended by what is contained in the Scriptures? How many heresies engendered their raison d'être from them? Should the Scriptures be erased or never given in the first place because of those who are offended? By no means! Rather, it was absolutely necessary that they be given because of those about to reap the benefit from them. 7. On the one hand, for those who stumble over these things -- I will not stop saying the same things again -- let the stumbling blocks be reckoned to themselves. On the other hand, those who were to be benefited by what the Scriptures contain would have been wronged if the willful misunderstanding and indifference of others robbed them of this benefit they should have gained from their reception. Therefore, don't speak to me about those who are perishing. As I have said

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[3] John 15: 22

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in a previous text, not one of those who does not injure himself can be injured by others at any time, even if life itself is placed in jeopardy.

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Κεφ. ις΄. Ὅτι τὸν ἑαυτὸν μὲ ἀδικοῦντα οὐδεὶς παραβλαψαι δύναται ἕτερος

1. Τί γὰρ ὁ Ἄβελ ἐβλάβη, εἰπέ μοι, ὑπὸ ἀδελφικῆς κατενεχθεὶς δεξιᾶς καὶ ἄωρον καὶ βίαιον ὑπομείνας θάνατον ; ἀλλ᾽ οὐχὶ μᾶλλον ἐκέρδανε, λαμπρότερον ἀναδησάμενος στέφανον ; Τί δὲ ὁ Ἰακώβ, ὁ τοσαῦτα παθὼν παρὰ τοῦ ἀδελφοῦ καὶ ἄπολις καὶ φυγὰς καὶ μετανάστης καὶ δοῦλος γενόμενος καὶ εἰς ἔσχατον λιμὸν κατενεχθείς ; 2. Τί δαὶ ὁ Ἰωσήφ, ὁμοιώς καὶ αὐτὸς ἄπολις, ἄοικος καὶ αἰμάλωτος καὶ δοῦλος καὶ δεσμώτης γεγονὼς καὶ περὶ τῶν ἐσχάτων κινδυνεύσας καὶ ἐν τῇ οἰκείᾳ καὶ ἐν τῇ ἀλλοτρίᾳ καὶ τοιαύτας ὑπομείνας διαβολάς ; Τί δαὶ ὁ Μωυσῆς ὑπὸ τοσούτου δήμου μυριάκις καταλευσθεὶς καὶ παρὰ τῶν εὐεργετηθέντων ἐπιβουλευθείς ; Τὶ δαὶ οἱ προφῆται πάντες τοσαῦτα παρὰ τῶν Ἰουδαίων παθόντες κακά ; Τί δαὶ ὁ Ἰώβ, ὑπὸ τοῦ διαβόλου μυρίαις μηχαναῖς πολεμηθείς ; 3. Τί δαὶ οἱ παῖδες οἱ τρεῖς ; Τί δαὶ ὁ Δανιήλ, περὶ ζωῆς, περὶ ἐλευθερίας, περὶ τῶν ἐσχάτων κινδυνεύσας αὐτῶν ; Τί δαὶ ὁ Ἠλίας ἐσχάτῃ πενίᾳ συζῶν, ἐλαυνόμενος, δραπετεύων, τὰς ἐρήμους οἰκῶν, φυγὰς ἀεὶ καὶ μετανάστης γινόμενος ; Τί δαὶ ὁ Δαυῒδ, τοσαῦτα μὲν παρὰ τοῦ Σαούλ, τοσαῦτα δὲ ὕστερον παρὰ τοῦ ἰδίου παιδὸς παθών ; οὐχὶ μᾶλλον διέλαμψε, τὰ ἔσχατα πάσχων κακά, ἢ ὅτε εὐημερίας ἀπήλαυε ; 4. Τί δαὶ ὁ Ἰωάννης ἀποτμηθείς ; Τί δαὶ οἱ ἀπόστολοι, οἱ μὲν ἀποτμηθέντες, οἱ δὲ ἑτέραις τιμωρίαις παραδοθέντες ; Τί δαὶ οἱ μάρτυρες, οἱ δειναῖς βασάνοις τὴν ψυχὴν ἀπορρήξαντες ;

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οὐχὶ πάντες οὗτοι τότε μάλιστα ἔλαμψαν, ὅτε ἐπηρεάζοντο ; ὅτε ἐπεβουλεύοντο ; ὅτε τὰ ἔσχατα πάσχοντες γενναίως εἱστήκεισαν ;

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Chapter Sixteen

No other person is able to harm the one who does not harm himself.

1. Tell me, in what way was Abel harmed, he who was destroyed by the right hand of his brother, he who endured an untimely and violent death? But did he not rather profit, having crowned himself with a brighter crown? In what way was Jacob harmed, who suffered so many things from his brother, who was without a country, an exile, an emigrant, who became a slave and was afflicted with the most severe hunger? 2. In what way was Joseph harmed, he who like Jacob was without a country, homeless, a prisoner, a slave, wrapped in chains, exposed to the worst dangers -- both in his own household and in a foreign land -- he who endured terrible slanders. In what way was Moses harmed, he who was stoned numberless times by so great a multitude and plotted against by the very people he had shown such kindness. In what way were the prophets harmed, they who suffered such a great number of evils from the Jews? In what way was Job harmed, he whom the devil warred against with thousands of devices? 3. In what way were the three children harmed? In what way was Daniel harmed, he who was exposed to the most severe dangers because of his life and the freedom he exercised. In what way was Elijah harmed, he

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who lived in dire poverty, harassed, constantly fleeing for his life, living in the wilderness, a constant fugitive and wanderer? In what way was David harmed, he who suffered so many things from Saul, and later from his own son? Didn't he shine more brightly while he suffered the worst evils than when he enjoyed health and wealth? 4. In what way was John harmed, he who was beheaded? In what way were the apostles harmed, some of whom were beheaded and others handed over to even worst punishments? In what way were the martyrs harmed, whose souls were broken by the most severe tortures? Didn't they all shine most brightly at the very moment they were being abused, at the time others set traps for them, when they nobly stood firm while suffering the worst agonies?

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Κεφ. ιζ΄. Ὅτι μεγίστης προνοίας καὶ ἀγαθότητος καὶ ἀγάπης Θεοῦ ὁ σταυρὸς δεῖγμα

1. Τὸν δὲ κοινὸν ἡμῶν Δεσπότην διὰ τὰ ἄλλα πάντα ἀνυμνοῦντες, οὐ διὰ τοῦτο μάλιστα ἀνυμνοῦμεν, δοξάζοντες, ἐκπληττόμενοι διὰ τὸν σταυρόν, διὰ τὸν θάνατον ἐκεῖνον τὸν ἐπάρατον ; Οὐ τοῦτο ἄνω καὶ κάτω σημεῖον ὁ Παῦλος ποιεῖται τῆς ἀγάπης αὐτοῦ τῆς περὶ ἡμᾶς, τὸ ἀποθανεῖν ; τὸ ὑπὲρ τοιούτων ἀποθανεῖν ; καὶ παρεὶς εἰπεῖν τὸν οὐρανόν, τὴν γῆν, τὴν θάλατταν, τὰ ἄλλα πάντα ἅπερ ἐποίησεν ὁ Χριστὸς εἰς χρείαν ἡμῶν καὶ ἀνάπαυσιν, ἄνω καὶ κάτω περιστρέφει τὸν σταυρόν, λέγων . 2. "Συνέστησε δὲ τὴν ἑαυτοῦ ἀγάπην ὁ Θεὸς εἰς ἡμᾶς, ὅτι, ἔτι ἁμαρτωλῶν ὄντων ἡμῶν, Χριστὸς ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν ἀπέθανε" · καὶ ἐντεῦθεν ἡμῖν χρηστὰς ὑποτείνει τὰς ἐλπίδας λέγων · "Εἰ γὰρ ἐχθροὶ ὄντες κατηλλάγημεν τῷ Θεῷ διὰ τοῦ θανάτου τοῦ Υἱοῦ αὐτοῦ, πολλῷ μᾶλλον καταλλαγέντες σωθησόμεθα ἐν τῇ ζωῇ αὐτοῦ." 3. Οὐκ ἐπὶ τούτῳ μάλιστα καὶ αὐτὸς καλλωπίζεται καὶ μέγα φρονεῖ καὶ σκιρτᾷ καὶ πέταται ὑπὸ τῆς ἡδονῆς, Γαλάταις γράφων οὕτως ; "Ἐμοὶ δὲ μὴ γένοιτο καυχᾶσθαι, εἰ μὴ ἐν τῷ σταυρῷ τοῦ Κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ ;" Καὶ τί θαυμάζεις, εἰ Παῦλος ἐπὶ τούτῳ σκιρτᾷ καὶ πηδᾷ καὶ καλλωπίζεται ; Αὐτὸς ὁ ταῦτα παθών, δόξαν τὸ πρᾶγμα καλεῖ. "Πάτερ γάρ, φησίν, ἐλήλυθεν ἡ ὥρα, δόξασόν σου τὸν Υἱόν."

4. Καὶ ὁ μαθητὴς δὲ ὁ ταῦτα γράψας οὕτως ἔλεγεν · "Οὔπω γὰρ ἦν ἐν αὐτοῖς Πνεῦμα ἅγιον, ὅτι Ἰησοῦς οὐδέπω ἐδοξάσθη",

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δόξαν καλῶν τὸν σταυρόν. Ὅτε δὲ αὐτοῦ τὴν ἀγάπην παραστῆσαι ἐβουλήθη, καὶ αὐτὸς τί εἶπε ; σημεῖα, θαύματα, τεράστιά τινα ; Οὐδαμῶς, ἀλλὰ τὸν σταυρὸν εἰς μέσον φέρει, λέγων · "Οὕτως ἠγάπησεν ὁ θεὸς τὸν κόσμον ὅτι τὸν Υἱὸν αὐτοῦ τὸν μονογενῆ ἔδωκεν, ἵνα πᾶς ὁ πιστεύων εἰπ ' αὐτὸν μὴ ἀπόληται, ἀλλ ' ἔχῃ ζωὴν αἰώνιον." 5. Καὶ Παῦλος πάλιν · "Ὅς γε τοῦ ἰδίου Υἱοῦ οὐκ ἐφείσατο, αλλ ' ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν πάντων παρέδωκεν αὐτόν, πῶς οὐχὶ καὶ σὺν αὐτῷ τα πάντα ἡμῖν χαρίσεται." Καὶ εἰς ταπεινοφροσύνην δὲ ὅταν ἐνάγῃ, ἐντεῦθεν κατασκευάζει τὴν παραίνεσιν, οὕτω λέγων · "Εἴ τις παράκλησις ἐν Χριστῷ, εἴ τι παραμύθιον ἀγάπης, εἴ τις κοινωνία Πνεύματος, εἴ τινα σπλάγχνα καὶ οἰκτιρμοί, πληρώσατέ μου τὴν χαράν, ἵνα τὸ αὐτὸ φρονῆτε, τὴν αὐτὴν ἀγάπην ἔχοντες σύμψυχοι, τὸ ἓν φρονοῦντες, μηδὲν κατ ' ἐριθείαν ἢ κενοδοξίαν, ἀλλὰ τῇ ταπεινοφροσύνῃ ἀλληλους προηγούμενοι ὑπερέχοντας ἑαυτῶν." 6. Εἶτα εἰσάγων τὴν συμβουλήν, φησί · "Τοῦτο γὰρ φρονείσθω ἐν ὑμῖν ὅ καὶ ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ, ὅς ἐν μορφῇ θεοῦ ὑπάρχων, οὐχ ἁρπαγμὸν ἡγήσατο τὸ εἶναι ἴσα θεῷ, ἀλλ ' ἑαυτὸν ἐκένωσε, μορφὴν δούλου λαβών, ἐν ὁμοιώματι ἀνθρώπου γενόμενος καὶ ἐν σχήματι εὑρεθεὶς ὡς ἄνθρωπος · ἐταπείνωσεν ἑαυτόν, γενόμενος ὑπήκοος μέχρι θανάτου, θανάτου δὲ σταυροῦ."

7. Καὶ περὶ ἀγάπης δὲ πάλιν συμβουλεύων τοῦτο εἰς μέσον παράγει · "Ἀγαπᾶτε, λέγων, ἀλλήλους, καθὼς καὶ ὁ Χριστὸς ἠγάπησεν ἡμᾶς καὶ ἑαυτὸν παρέδωκεν ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν προσφορὰν καὶ θυσίαν τῷ θεῷ εἰς ὀσμὴν εὐωδίας." Καὶ γυναῖκας συναπτων

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ἀνδράσιν εἰς ὁμόνοιαν, οὕτω λέγει · "Οἱ ἄνδρες, ἀγαπᾶτε τὰς γυναῖκας ἑαυτῶν, καθὼς καὶ ὁ Χριστὸς ἠγάπησε τὴν Ἐκκλησιάν καὶ παρέδωκεν ἑαυτὸν ὑπὲρ αὐτῆς.

8. Καὶ αὐτὸς δὲ δεικνὺς πῶς αὐτῷ τὸ πρᾶγμα περισπουδαστον ἦν καὶ πῶς σφόδρα ἦρα τοῦ πάθους, τὸν πρῶτον τῶν ἀποστόλων, τὴν κρηπῖδα τῆς Ἐκκλησίας, τὸν κορυφαῖον τοῦ χοροῦ τῶν ἀποστόλων καὶ ταῦτα ἐξ ἀγνοίας εἰπόντα " Ἵλεώς σοι, Κύριε, οὐ μὴ ἔσται σοι τοῦτο", ἄκουσον τί ἐκάλεσεν · "Ὑπαγε ὀπίσω μου, Σατανᾶ, σκάνδαλόν μου εἶ" · τῇ ὑπερβολῇ τῆς ὕβρεώς τε καὶ τῆς ἐπιτιμήσεως τὴν πολλὴν περὶ τὸ πρᾶγμα αὐτοῦ σπουδὴν ἐνδεικνύμενος.

9. Καὶ τὴν μὲν ἀνάστασιν λάθρα καὶ ἐν παραβύστῳ πεποιήκεν, ἐπιτρέπων, αὐτῆς τὴν ἀπόδειξιν τῷ μετὰ ταῦτα χρόνῳ παντί · τὸν δὲ σταυρὸν ἐν μέσῃ τῇ πόλει, ἐν μέσῃ τῇ ἑορτῇ, ἐν μέσῳ τῷ δήμῳ τῶν Ἰουδαίων, ἑκατέρων τῶν δικαστηριῶν παρόντων, Ῥωμαϊκῶν τε καὶ Ἰουδαϊκῶν, τῆς ἑορτῆς πάντας συναγούσης, ἐν ἡμέρᾳ μέσῃ, ἐν κοινῷ τῆς οἰκουμένης θεάτρῳ ὑπέμεινε.

10. Καὶ ἐπειδὴ οἱ παρόντες μόνον ἑώρων τὸ γινόμενον, ἐπέταξε τῷ ἡλίῳ κρυβέντι πανταχοῦ τῆς οἰκουμένης ἀπαγγεῖλαι τὸ τόλμημα. Καίτοι πολλοῖς, ὅπερ ἔφθην εἰπων, σκάνδαλον τὸ πρᾶγμα ἐγίνετο · ἀλλ᾽ οὐ δεῖ τούτοις προσέχειν, ἀλλὰ τοῖς σωζομένοις, τοῖς κατωρθωκόσι.

11. Καὶ τί θαυμάζεις, εἰ ἐν τῷ παρόντι βίῳ οὕτω λαμπρὸς ὁ σταυρὸς ὡς καὶ δόξαν αὐτὸν καλεῖσθαι Χριστὸν καὶ τὸν Παῦλον ἐπ᾽ αὐτῷ καυχᾶσθαι ; Ἐν γὰρ ἐκείνῃ τῇ φοβερᾷ καὶ φρικωδει ἡμέρᾳ, ὅταν ἔλθῃ τὴν δόξαν ἐνδεικνύμενος τὴν ἑαυτοῦ, οἵταν

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ἔλθῃ ἐν τῇ δόξῃ τοῦ Πατρὸς αὐτοῦ, ὅταν τὸ φοβερὸν παρῇ κριτήριον, ὅταν πᾶσα ἡ τῶν ἀνθρώπων παραστήκῃ φύσις, οἷον ποταμοὶ πυρὸς καχλάζοντες, ὅταν ἀγγέλων δῆμοι καὶ τῶν ἄνω δυνάμεων ἀθρόον ἐκχέωνται κάτω μετ᾽ αὐτοῦ, οἷαν βραβεῖα τὰ μυρία ἐκεῖνα, ὅταν οἱ μὲν ὡς ἥλιος λάμπωσιν, οἱ δὲ ὡς ἀστέρες, 12. ὅταν συμμορίαι μαρτύρων, ὅταν ἀποστόλων χοροί, ὅταν προφητῶν τάγματα, ὅταν γενναίων ἀνδρῶν σύλλογοι πάντες εἰς μέσον ἄγωνται, τότε δή, τότε ἐν ἐκείνῃ τῇ λαμπρότητι, ἐν ἐκείνῃ τῇ περιφανείᾳ, αὐτὸν ἔρχεται φέρων λαμπρὰς ἀφιέντα ἀκτῖνας. "Τότε γάρ, φησί, φανήσεται τὸ σημεῖον τοῦ Υἱοῦ τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ἐν τῷ οὐρανῷ, καὶ ὁ ἥλιος σκοτισθήσεται καὶ ἡ σελήνη οὐ δώσει τὸ φέγγος αὐτῆς, τὸ δὲ σημεῖον τοῦ σταυροῦ φανήσεται." 13. Ὢ πάθους λαμπρότης, ὡ σταυροῦ φαιδρότης · ἥλιος σκοτίζεται καὶ ἄστρα πίπτει ὥσπερ φύλλα, ὁ δὲ σταυρὸς πάντων ἐκείνων φανότερον διαλάμπει, ὅλον κατέχων τὸν οὐρανόν. Ὁρᾷς πῶς ἐγκαλλωπίζεται τούτῳ ὁ Δεσπότης ; πῶς δόξαν αὐτοῦ τὸ πρᾶγμα ὂν ἀποφαίνει, ὅταν ἐν ἐκείνῃ δεικνύῃ αὐτὸν τῇ ἡμέρᾳ τῇ οἰκουμένῃ πάσῃ μετὰ τοσαύτης λαμπηδόνος;

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Chapter Seventeen

The cross is a proof of God's great providence, goodness, and love.

When we praise our common Master because of all the various reasons one can propose, don't we praise him most of all by glorifying him as we are struck with amazement before the cross, before that accursed death? Doesn't Paul make use of this sign of his love for us in every possible way, that is, his death? A death for people such as us? Having ceased discussing the sky, the earth, the sea, and all the other things Christ had created for our service and repose, Paul considers the cross at every possible opportunity, saying: 2. "God demonstrates his own love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us."[1] From this fact Paul holds out to us auspicious hopes, saying: "For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of his Son, how much more, having been reconciled, shall we be saved by his life?"[2] 3. Is it not because of the cross that Paul himself especially glories, lifts up his thoughts, leaps with exhilaration, and flies away in delight as he

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[1] Romans 5: 8

[2] Romans 5: 10

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writes to the Galatians: "But may I never boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ"[3]? Why are you astonished if Paul leaps, bounds, and glories on account of the cross? For Christ himself, the one who suffered these things, calls this event his glory. "Father," he says, "the hour has come. Glorify your Son."[4] 4. And the disciple who wrote these things said this: "For the Spirit was not yet in them, because Jesus had not yet been glorified,"[5] referring to the cross as his glory. But when he wanted to set Christ's love before our minds, what does he talk about? Signs? Wonders? Various kinds of marvels? In no wise! Rather, he focuses our attention on the cross, saying: "For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, so that every one who believes in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."[6] 5. And Paul says again: "He who did not spare his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how will he not with him give us all things."[7] When Paul urges us to practice humility, it is from this perspective that he constructs his exhortation, speaking in this way: "If there

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[3] Galatians 6: 14a

[4] John 17: 1

[5] John 7: 39b

[6] John 3: 16

[7] Romans 8: 32

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is any encouragement in Christ, any comfort of love, any fellowship of the Spirit, any tenderness and compassion, fulfill my joy by being like-minded, having the same love, united in spirit, thinking the same thing, doing nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility considering others better than yourselves."[8] 6. Then in introducing his counsel, he says: "Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, who although he existed in the form of God, did not consider equality with God as something to be grasped, but emptied himself, taking on the form of a slave, being made in human likeness, and being found in form as a human being, he humbled himself, and became obedient to death, even death on a cross."[9] 7. Paul introduces this thought as he again offers advice concerning love: "Love one another, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God."[10] And he unites wives and husbands in one mind when he writes this way: "Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the Church and gave himself for her."[11] 8. Christ himself is showing how fervently he desired the cross and

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[8] Philippians 2: 1-3

[9] Philippians 2: 5-8

[10] Ephesians 5: 2

[11] Ephesians 5: 25

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how deeply he embraced its suffering when he responds to the foremost of the apostles, the foundation of the Church, and the leader of the apostolic band. After Peter said in ignorance: "God forbid, Lord! This will never happen to you," listen to how Christ responds. "Get behind me, Satan! You are a stumbling block for me."[12] By the severity of the rebuke and the reproof Christ displays his great zeal concerning the event of the cross. 9. While he accomplished the resurrection secretly and hiddenly, entrusting its proof to the succeeding centuries, he endured the cross in the midst of the city, the feast, and the Jewish people, while two courts of justice were in session -- that of the Romans and that of the Jews -- as the feast brought everyone together, in the middle of the day, in the public theatre of the world. 10. Since only those present actually saw what was taking place, he commanded the sun to hide itself to announce what they had dared to do all over the world. And indeed to many, as I have been quick to say, the event of the cross became an offense. However, one should not focus his attention on those who are offended, but rather on those who are being saved, on those who have successfully accomplished the virtuous life. 11. And why are you amazed, if in this present life the brightness of the cross is such that Christ calls it his glory and Paul

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[12] Cf. Matthew 16: 22-23.

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boasts in it? For in that fearful and awe-inspiring day, when Christ comes displaying his glory, when he comes in the glory of his Father, when the frightful court of judgment is present, when the full nature of human disposition and activity appears for all to see, when rivers of fire boil and bubble, when throngs of angels and powers from above suddenly stream down with him, when there will be countless numbers of rewards, when some will shine like the sun and others like the stars, 12. when companies of martyrs, bands of apostles, groups of prophets, and gatherings of noble men will be led into public view -- at that time, yes, at that time, in that brilliance, in a scene open to the view of everyone, Christ comes bearing the cross as it sends forth shining beams. "For then," he says, "the sign of the Son of God will appear in heaven, and the sun will be darkened and the moon will not produce its light, but the sign of the cross will appear."[13] 13. O the splendor of the suffering! O the brilliance of the cross! The sun is darkened and the stars fall like leaves, but the cross shines more brightly than all of those, occupying the whole of heaven. Do you see how the Master prides himself in the cross? Do you see how he displays the event which is his glory, when in that day he shows it to all the world with such a brilliance of light?

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[13] Cf. Matthew 24: 30.

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Κεφ. ιή. Ὅτι οὐ μικρὸν ἀπὸ τῶν συμβάντων κέρδος τῇ ἐκκλησίᾳ γέγονεν

1. Καὶ σὺ τοίνυν, ὅταν ἴδῃς τινὰς ἀπὸ τῶν συμβάντων σκανδαλιζομένους, πρῶτον μὲν ἐκεῖνο λογίζου ὅτι οὐκ ἐντεῦθεν, ἀλλ' ἀπὸ τῆς οἰκείας ἀσθενείας τὰ σκάνδαλα ἔχουσι · καὶ δηλοῦσιν οἱ τοῦτο μὴ παθόντες. Ἔπειτα σκόπει ὅτι πολλοὶ καὶ διέλαμψαν ἐντεῦθεν μειζόνως, τὸν Θεὸν δοξάζοντες καὶ μετὰ πάσης εὐχαριστοῦντες σπουδῆς αὐτῷ καὶ ἐπὶ τούτοις. Οὐκοῦν μὴ τοὺς σαλευομένους ὅρα, ἀλλὰ καὶ τοὺς παγίως ἑστῶτας καὶ ἀκινήτους μένοντας καὶ ταύτῃ ἰσχυροτέρους γινομένους · μὴ τοὺς θορυβουμένους, ἀλλὰ καὶ τοὺς ἐξ οὐριῶν πλέοντας καὶ πολλῷ πλείους ὄντας τῶν παρασυρέντων. Εἰ δὲ πλείους ἦσαν ἐκεῖνοι, κρειττων εἷς ποιῶν τὸ θέλημα Κυρίου ἢ μύριοι παράνομοι.

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Chapter Eighteen

The Church has received no small benefit from these events.

And you, therefore, when you see certain people stumbling over the events which have come to pass, recognize first that the stumbling blocks arise from their own weakness and not from the events themselves. Those who have not suffered in the same manner clearly demonstrate this. Accordingly, consider that many people have shined more brightly in their faith because of these events, glorifying God and giving heartfelt thanks to him for all of these things. Don't focus your attention, then, on those who are being shaken, but rather on those who have stood firm and remain steady and through this stance of faith are becoming even stronger. Don't be preoccupied with those who are troubled. Those who are navigating the winds successfully are much more numerous than whose who are being swept away. Even if those being swept away were more numerous, it would be better to have just one person doing the will of God than to have thousands of transgressors.

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Κεφ. ιθ΄. Ὅτι πολλοὶ μάρτυρες ἐν τῇ ὑποθέσει ταύτῃ ἐγένοντο καὶ ζῶντες καὶ τετελευτηκότες

1. Ἐννόησον ὅσοι καὶ μαρτυρίου στέφανον ἀνεδήσαντο. Οἱ μὲν γὰρ ἐμαστιγώθησαν, οἱ δὲ εἰς δεσμωτήριον ἐνεβλήθησαν, οἱ δὲ ἁλύσεις ὡς κακοῦργοι περιέκειντο, οἱ δὲ πατρίδος ἐξέπεσον, οἱ δὲ οὐσίαν ἀπέβαλον, οἱ δὲ πρὸς τὴν ὑπεροριάν μετῳκίσθησαν, οἱ δὲ ἐσφάγησαν, οἱ μὲν καὶ τῇ πείρᾳ, οἱ δὲ τῇ γνώμῃ. 2. Καὶ γὰρ δοράτων γυμνουμένων καὶ ξιφῶν ἠκονημένων καὶ ἀπειλῶν καθ' ἑκάστην ἡμέραν γινομένων καὶ τῶν ἐν ἀρχαῖς θυμοῦ πνεόντων καὶ φόνων ἐπανατεινομένων καὶ μυρίων εἰδῶν κολάσεων καὶ τιμωριῶν, οὐκ εἶξαν, οὐδὲ ἐνέδωκαν, ἀλλ' ἔστησαν ἐπὶ τῆς πέτρας ἀκίνητοι, πάντα καὶ ποιῆσαι καὶ παθεῖν αἱρούμενοι, ὥστε μὴ κοινωνῆσαι τῇ παρανομίᾳ τῶν τὰ τοιαῦτα τετολμηκότων, οὐκ ἄνδρες δὲ μόνον, ἀλλὰ καὶ γυναῖκες.

3. Καὶ γὰρ καὶ γυναῖκες πρὸς τὸν ἀγῶνα ἀπεδύσαντο τοῦτον καὶ ἀνδρῶν πολλαχοῦ μᾶλλον ἠνδρίσαντο. Οὐ γυναῖκες δὲ μόνον, ἀλλὰ καὶ νέοι καὶ μειράκια κομιδῇ. Ταῦτ' οὖν, εἰπέ μοι, μικρά, τοσοῦτον δῆμον μαρτύρων κερδᾶναι τὴν Ἐκκλησίαν ; Μάρτυρες γὰρ ἅπαντες οὗτοι. Οὐ γὰρ δὴ μόνον ἐκεῖνοι οἱ εἰς δικαστήριον ἑλκυσθέντες καὶ θῦσαι κελευσθέντες καὶ μὴ πεισθέντες, παθόντες ἅπερ ἔπαθον, μάρτυρες ἂν εἶεν · ἀλλὰ κἀκεῖνοι οἱ ὑπὲρ οὑτουοῦν τῶν τῷ Θεῷ δοκούντων παθεῖν τι καταδεξάμενοι · καὶ εἴ τις μετὰ ἀκριβείας ἐξετάσειεν οὗτοι μᾶλλον ἢ ἐκεῖνοι.

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4. Οὐ γάρ ἐστιν ἴσον ὀλέθρου τοιούτου καὶ ἀπωλείας ψυχῆς προτεινομένης καταδέξασθαι παθεῖν τι καὶ μὴ παραπολέσθαι καὶ ὑπὲρ ἐλάττονος κατορθώματος τὴν αὐτὴν ταύτην ὑπομεῖναι τιμωρίαν. Ὅτι δὲ οὐχ οἱ σφαγέντες μόνον, ἀλλα καὶ οἱ παρεσκευασμένοι καὶ γενόμενοι πρὸς τοῦτο ἕτοιμοι, μαρτυρίου στέφανον ἀνεδήσαντο, τοῦτό τε αὐτὸ καὶ ὃ πρότερον εἰρηκα ὅτι ὃ ὑπὲρ ἐλαττόνων σφαγείς μάρτυς ἐστιν ἀπηρτισμένος, ἀπο τῆς Παύλου φωνῆς ἀποδεῖξαι τοῦτο πειράσομαι. 5. Ἀρξάμενος γαρ ἀπαριθμεῖσθαι τοὺς ἐπὶ τῶν προγόνων λάμψαντας ὁ μακάριος Παῦλος καὶ τὴν ἀρχὴν ἀπὸ τοῦ Ἄβελ ποιησάμενος, εἶτα προελθὼν εἰς τὸν Νῶε, τὸν Ἀβραάμ, τὸν Ἰσαάκ, τὸν Ἰακωβ, ἐπήγαγε λέγων · "Τοιγαροῦν καὶ ἡμεῖς τοσοῦτον ἔχοντες περικείμενον ἡμῖν νέφος μαρτύρων."

6. Καίτοιγε οὐ πάντες ἐσφάγησαν οὗτοι, μᾶλλον δὲ οὐδὲ εἷς, πλὴν δυοῖν ἢ τριῶν, τοῦ Ἄβελ καὶ τοῦ Ἰωάννου · οἱ δὲ ἄλλοι πάντες οἰκείᾳ τελευτῇ τὸν βίον κατέλυσαν. Καὶ Ἰωάννης δὲ αὐτὸς οὐ θῦσαι κελευσθεὶς καὶ μὴ καταδεξάμενος ἐσφάγη, οὐδὲ εἰς βωμὸν ἀχθείς, οὐδὲ πρὸς εἴδωλον ἑλκυσθείς, ἀλλ ὑπὲρ ῥήματος ἑνός. Ἐπειδὴ γαρ εἶπε τῷ Ἡρῴδῃ . "οὐκ ἔξεστί σοι ἔχειν τὴν γυναῖκα Φιλίππου τοῦ ἀδελφοῦ σου", καὶ τὸ δεσμοτήριον ᾤκησε καὶ τὴν σφαγὴν ἐκείνην ὑπέμεινεν.

7. Εἰ δὲ ὁ γάμον παρανομούμενον ἐκδικήσας, τό γε εἰς αὐτὸν ἦκον -- οὐδὲ γαρ διώρθωσε τὸ κακῶς γεγενημένον, ἀλλ εἶπε μόνον, παῦσαι δὲ οὐκ ἴσχυσεν -- εἰ τοίνυν ὁ μόνον εἰπὼν καὶ μηδὲν οἴκοθεν ἢ τοῦτο εἰσενεγκών, ἐπειδὴ ἀπετμήθη, μάρτυς καὶ μαρτύρων ἐστὶ πρῶτος · οἱ τοσαύτας σφαγὰς ὑπομείναντες

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καὶ οὐχὶ πρὸς Ἡρῴδην, ἀλλὰ πρὸς τοὺς κρατοῦντας τῆς οἰκουμένης ἁπάσης ἀποδυσάμενοι καὶ οὐχὶ γάμῳ παρανομουμένῳ, ἀλλὰ νόμοις πατρῷοις καὶ θεσμοῖς Ἐκκλησίας ἐπηρεασθεῖσι παραστάντες καὶ διὰ τῶν ῥημάτων καὶ διὰ τῶν πραγμάτων παρρησίαν ἐπιδειξάμενοι καὶ καθ' ἑκάστην ἡμέραν ἀποθνήσκοντες καὶ ἄνδρες καὶ γυναῖκες καὶ παῖδες, πῶς οὐκ ἂν εἶεν δίκαιοι μυριάκις εἰς τὸν τῶν μαρτύρων καταλεγῆναι χορόν.

8. Ἐπεὶ καὶ ὁ Αβραάμ, μὴ σφάξας τῇ πείρᾳ τὸν υἱόν, τῇ προθέσει ἔσφαξε καὶ φωνῆς ἤκουσεν ἄνωθεν λεγούσης ὅτι · "Οὐκ ἐφείσω τοῦ υἱοῦ σου τοῦ ἀγαπητοῦ δι' ἐμέ". Οὕτω πανταχοῦ καὶ ἡ γνώμη, ὅταν ἀπηρτισμένη ᾖ ἐπὶ τῆς ἀρετῆς, ὁλοκληρον λαμβάνει τὸν στέφανον.

9. Εἰ δὲ ἐκεῖνος, υἱοῦ μὴ φεισάμενος, οὕτως ἀνεκηρύττετο, οὗτοι ἑαυτῶν μὴ φεισάμενοι, ἐννόησον πόσον λήψονται μισθόν, οὐ μίαν, οὐ δύο καὶ τρεῖς ἡμέρας, ἀλλ' ὁλοκληρον τὸν βιόν ἐπὶ τῆς παρατάξεως ἱστάμενοι ταύτης, βαλλόμενοι λοιδορίαις, ὕβρεσιν, ἐπηρείαις, συκοφαντίαις. Οὐδὲ γὰρ τοῦτο μικρόν. Διὸ καὶ ὡς μέγα Παῦλος αὐτὸ θαυμάζει λέγων · "Τοῦτο μὲν ὀνειδισμοῖς καὶ θλίψεσι θεατριζόμενοι, τοῦτο δὲ κοινωνοὶ τῶν οὕτω πασχόντων γενηθέντες."

10. Τί ἄν τις εἴποι τοὺς καὶ αὐτοὺς ἀποθνήσκοντας καὶ τοὺς τὰ τοιαῦτα ἀθλοῦντας, ἀλείφοντας καὶ ἄνδρας καὶ γυναῖκας ; Καλῶς δὲ αὐτοὺς καὶ θαυμάζει. Καὶ γὰρ καὶ οὐσίας ἐπεδωκαν πολλοί, ὥστε τοὺς δεσμώτας καὶ τοὺς ἐχορίστους ἔχειν τινὰ παραμυθίαν τῆς τοσαύτης ταλαιπωρίας καὶ τὴν ἁρπαγὴν τῶν

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ὑπαρχόντων μετὰ χαρᾶς προσεδέξαντο κατὰ τὸ ἀποστολικὸν ἐκεῖνο λόγιον · ἕτεροι, οἱ μὲν πατρίδος, οἱ δὲ καὶ αὐτῆς ἐξεβλήθησαν τῆς ζωῆς.

11. Ὁρῶν τοίνυν τοσοῦτον πλοῦτον, τοσοῦτον κέρδος, τοσαύτην ἐμπορίαν τῇ Ἐκκλησίᾳ συνηγμένην, τοσούτους θησαυροὺς ἀποτιθεμένους, πυρὸς σφοδροτέρους γινομένους τοὺς πρότερον ἀναπεπτωκότας καὶ τοὺς θεάτροις προσηλωμένους εἰς τὰς ἐρημίας ἐξιόντας καὶ τὰς νάπας καὶ τὰ ὄρη ποιοῦντας ἐκκλησίαν καὶ οὐδενὸς ἐξάγοντος τὴν ἀγέλην, εἰς τὴν τῶν ποιμένων τάξιν μεταστάντα τὸ πρόβατα καὶ τοὺς στρατιώτας εἰς τὴν τοῦ στρατηγοῦ, παρρησίας ἕνεκεν καὶ ἀνδρείας καὶ πάντας μετὰ τῆς προσηκούσης θερμότητος, σπουδῆς, ἐμμελείας, τὰς συνάξεις ἐπιτελοῦντας, οὐκ ἐκπλήττῃ καὶ θαυμάζεις, ὅσον ἐκ τούτου κατόρθωμα γέγονεν ; 12. Οὐ γὰρ δὴ μόνον οἱ ὀρθῶς βιοῦντες, ἀλλὰ πολλοὶ καὶ τῶν περὶ τὰ θέατρα μεμηνότων καὶ ἱπποδρομίας προσεχόντων, ὑπὸ τοῦ ζήλου πυρὸς σφοδροτέρου πυρωθέντες, πᾶσαν ἐκείνην ἀπέθεντο τὴν μανίαν καὶ κατ ᾽ αὐτῶν τῶν ξιφῶν σχεδὸν ἐπήδησαν, πρὸς ἄρχοντας παρρησιαζόμενοι, βασάνων καταφρονοῦντες, ἀπειλῶν καταγελῶντες, δεικνύντες ὅσον ἰσχύει ἀρετὴ καὶ πῶς ἔνι τὸν σφόδρα ἀπολλυμένον, μετανοήσαντα καὶ μεταστάντα αὐτῆς ἅψασθαι τῶν οὐρανῶν τῆς ἁψῖδος.

13. Τοσαῦτα οὖν βραβεῖα ὁρῶν, τοσούτους στεφάνους πλεκομένους, τοσαύτην διδασκαλίαν γινομένην, πόθεν, εἰπέ μοι, σκανδαλίζῃ ; Ἀπὸ τῶν ἀπολωλότων, φησίν. Ἀλλ ᾽, ὅπερ ἔφην καὶ λέγων οὐ παύσομαι, οὗτοι ἑαυτοῖς λογιζέσθωσαν τῆς

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ἀπωλείας τὴν ὑπόθεσιν. Τοῦτο γὰρ δι᾽ ὅλου ὁ λόγος ἡμῖν ἀγωνιζόμενος ἔδειξεν. Εἶπω καὶ ἕτερον κατόρθωμα. Πόσοι προσωπεῖον σὐλαβείας περικείμενοι, πόσοι πεπλασμένην πραότητα ἔχοντες, πόσοι μεγάλοι τινὲς εἶναι νομιζόμενοι, καὶ οὐκ ὄντες, ἀθρόον ἐπὶ τοῦ παρόντος διηλέγχθησαν καιροῦ καὶ τὰ τῆς ἀπάτης αὐτοῖς διερρύη καὶ ὅπερ ἦσαν ἐφάνησαν, οὐχ ὅπερ ὑπεκρίνοντο καὶ ἠπάτων ;

14. Οὐ μικρὸν δὲ τοῦτο, ἀλλὰ καὶ σφόδρα μέγιστον εἰς ὠφέλειαν τῶν ἐθελόντων προσέχειν, τὸ διαγνῶναι τοὺς ἔχοντας τῶν προβάτων τὰς δορὰς καὶ μὴ ἀναμίγνυσθαι τοὺς λύκους τοὺς οὕτω κρυπτομένους τοῖς ὄντως προβάτοις. Καὶ γὰρ κάμινος γέγονεν ὁ καιρὸς οὗτος, τὰ χαλκὸν ἔχοντα τῶν νομισμάτων διελέγχων, τὸν μόλιβδον κατατήκων, τὴν καλάμην κατακαίων, τὰς τιμίας ὕλας τιμιωτέρας ἀποφαίνων. Τοῦτο καὶ ὁ Παῦλος σημαίνων ἔλεγε · "Δεῖ δὲ καὶ αἱρέσεις εἶναι, ἵνα οἱ δόκιμοι φανεροὶ γένωνται ἐν ὑμῖν."

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Chapter Nineteen

Many martyrs lived and died with this as their sure foundation.

1. Consider how many people have crowned themselves with the crown of a martyr. Some were whipped, others thrown into prison, others wrapped in chains as though they were criminals, others banished from their homeland, others lost their material possessions, others were led away to foreign lands, others were slaughtered -- some actually by the edge of the sword and others clearly thought this was going to happen. 2. For while those who opposed them were unsheathing their spears, sharpening their swords, making threats each day -- as the authorities breathed out wrath and threatened them with murder and various kinds of punishments and tortures -- they didn't draw back fearfully, nor did they give in. Instead, they stood firm on the rock, steadfast, choosing to do everything and suffer everything, rather than share in the transgression of those who dared to do such things; and these were not only men, but also women. 3. Indeed, women prepared themselves for this combat and often times demonstrated greater bravery than men. And not only women, but even young people and very young children. Tell me, then, is it a small matter that the Church has gained such a company of martyrs? For these were all

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martyrs. For it is not only those who were dragged off to court, were commanded to sacrifice, refused to obey, and suffered what they suffered who were martyrs, but also those who consented to suffer something in order to be pleasing to God. And if one would analyze the situation with care, it is rather these people than those. 4. For it is not the same, when one threatens you with such ruin and the destruction of your soul, to accept to suffer anything rather than to lose it, than to suffer the same torture for a value of much less significance. For it is not only those who were slaughtered, but also those who were prepared to meet this fate, who were crowned with the crown of a martyr. I have said the very same thing earlier -- the one who has met his death for less important matters is an accomplished martyr. I will attempt to demonstrate this from the voice of Paul. 5. Having begun to count those among the ancestors who were illustrious, the blessed Paul, having started with Abel, then went on to Noah, Abraham, Issac, Jacob, and continued, saying: "Therefore assuredly we have around us such a cloud of witnesses."[1] 6. And yet not all these witnesses were slaughtered as martyrs. Rather, not one died this way, except two or three, Abel and John. All the others died a natural death. And even John himself was not put to death for refusing to obey the command to

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[1] Hebrews 12: 1a

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sacrifice after being led to the altar, nor for having been dragged before an idol, but rather for one word. Indeed, because he said: "It is not right for you to have the wife of Philip, your brother,"[2] he lived in prison and was slaughtered like a sacrificial lamb. 7. Now if the one who spoke out against an unlawful marriage, as much as it was in his power to do so, for he did not correct the evil which had occurred -- he only spoke out against it, but was unable to bring it to an end -- if, then, the one who only spoke and could contribute no more than this from himself -- since he was beheaded -- is a martyr, indeed, the foremost of martyrs, then those who have endured such persecutions, who have stripped for battle, not only against Herod, but against all the powers of the entire world, who have resisted, not only a lawless marriage, but have defended the laws of the fathers and the ordinances of the Church which had been treated despitefully, demonstrating their boldness through both words and deeds, each day prepared to die, men, women, and children -- how would they not be rightly reckoned among the company of martyrs? 8. Seeing that Abraham, too, while he did not literally sacrifice his son, in his intention he consummated the sacrifice and heard the voice from heaven saying: "You did not spare your beloved

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[2] Cf. Matthew 14: 4.

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son for my sake."[3] In the same way, in every situation where the intention is motivated by virtue, it receives the entire crown. 9. If Abraham was acclaimed in such a fashion for not sparing his own son, consider what kind of a reward those who did not spare themselves will receive, who for not one or two or three days, but remaining steadfast for their entire lives in this struggle, bombarded with slanders, insults, abuses, and calumnies. For this is no small matter. This is why Paul esteems it as a great thing, saying: "Sometimes you were publicly exposed to insult and persecution; at other times you stood side by side with those who were suffering in this way."[4] 10. What should one say about those who have died while suffering such things, training men and women for the battles of the Christian life? It is most fitting that Paul admires them. For many voluntarily gave away their possessions so that prisoners and exiles might have some encouragement in the midst of such affliction. They accepted the seizure of their goods with joy according to that apostolic word. As for others, some were banished from their homeland, others from life itself. 11. In seeing, therefore, such wealth, such gain, such profit gathered together in the Church, such

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[3] Genesis 22: 12b

[4] Hebrews 10: 33

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treasures stowed away, those who first were exceedingly frightened becoming more zealous than fire, and those who were devoted to the theatre going out into the wilderness, making a church out of the mountains and valleys; having no one there to lead the flock, the sheep themselves transferred into the order of pastors, the soldiers into the position of the general -- on account of their boldness and courage -- celebrating church services with a befitting fervor, earnestness, and grace, aren't you astounded and amazed at the acts of virtue which have resulted from these events? 12. For it was not only those living uprightly, but many who used to get drunk at theatrical spectacles and devoted themselves to the horse races, who, having been purified by the fervent heat of a raging fire, renounced all that madness and all but leaped upon the swords of their persecutors, making a bold confession before magistrates, disdaining tortures, laughing at threats, as they demonstrated how powerful virtue is, and how after repentance and change it is possible for one who is being violently destroyed to reach the summit of heaven. 13. Therefore, seeing such great rewards, such woven crowns, such teaching entering the world, tell me what is the source of your stumbling before these events? One person says, "Those who have fallen away cause me to stumble." But, as I have said and will not cease saying, those who are lost should reckon the cause of their

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destruction to themselves. This discourse has been endeavoring throughout to demonstrate this to us. I would also state another objective. How many have clothed themselves in a mask of piety, how many have a forged gentleness, how many consider themselves to be of some repute and aren't, and suddenly in the present circumstances have been utterly refuted. The sham of their subterfuge has flowed away like water and what they really were has been disclosed -- not what they were dissembling and pretending. 14. Now this is no small thing. Rather, it is of considerable importance for the utility of those who are willing to pay heed, both for the discerning of those who have skins of sheep and for avoiding the mixture of wolves who conceal themselves as sheep with those who truly are such. For this present time has become a furnace for distinguishing those pieces of money containing bronze by melting down the lead, burning up the residue, and rendering the precious material even more precious. Paul signifies this when he says: "It is necessary that there be heresies, in order that those who are approved might become manifest among you."[5]

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[5] 1 Corinthians 11: 19

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Κεφ. κ΄. Ὅτι καὶ ἐπὶ τῶν ἀποστόλων χαλεπώτερα συνέβη

1. Μηδὲν οὖν σε τούτων σκανδαλιζέτω, μὴ ἱερεὺς νῦν φαῦλος γεγενημένος καὶ λύκου παντὸς ἀγριώτερον ἐπιπηδῶν τῇ ἀγελῇ, μὴ τῶν κρατούντων τις πολλὴν ὠμότητα ἐνδεικνύμενος. Ἐννόησον γὰρ ὅτι καὶ ἐπὶ τῶν ἀποστόλων συνέβη τούτων χαλεπώτερα. 2. Ὅ τε γὰρ κρατῶν τότε τὸ σκῆπτρον, τὸ μυστήριον τῆς ἀνομίας ἦν -- οὕτω γὰρ αὐτὸν ὁ Παῦλος ἐκάλεσε -- πᾶν εἶδος κακίας ἐπελθὼν καὶ πάντας ἀποκρύψας τῇ πονηρίᾳ, ἀλλ᾽ οὐδὲν οὔτε τὴν Ἐκκλησίαν, οὔτε τοὺς γενναιόυς ἐκείνους ἄνδρας τοῦτο παρέβλαψεν, ἀλλὰ καὶ λαμπροτέρους ἀπέφηνεν · οἵ τε ἱερεῖς τῶν Ἰουδαίων οὕτω φαῦλοι καὶ πονηροί τινες ἦσαν ὡς κελεύεσθαι τοὺς λαοὺς τὸν ζῆλον αὐτῶν τοῦ βίου φεύγειν · 3. "Ἐπὶ γὰρ τῆς Μωυσέως καθέδρας, φησὶν ὁ Σωτήρ, ἐκάθισαν οἱ γραμματεῖς καὶ οἱ Φαρισαῖοι · πάντα οὖν ὅσα ἂν λέγωσιν ὑμῖν ποιεῖν, ποιεῖτε · κατὰ δὲ τὰ ἔργα αὐτῶν μὴ ποιεῖτε" · καίτοι τί γένοιτ᾽ ἂν πονηρότερον ἱερέων, ὧν ὁ ζῆλος ἀπολλύειν ἔμελλε τοὺς μιμουμένους ; Ἀλλ᾽ ὅμως καὶ τοιούτων ὄντων τῶν τότε κρατούντων, οἱ λάμψαντες, οἱ στεφανωθέντες οὐδὲν παρεβλάβησαν, ἀλλὰ μειζόνως ἐδοξάσθησαν. Οὐ τοίνυν ξενίζεσθαι χρὴ τοῖς γινομένοις. Πανταχοῦ γὰρ πειρασμοὶ τοῖς νήφουσίν εἰσι παρεζευγμένοι ἀπὸ τῶν οἰκείων, ἀπὸ τῶν ἀλλοτριῶν.
4. Διὰ τοῦτο καὶ Παῦλος τὰς νιφάδας ὁρῶν τῶν κινδύνων τὰς ἐπαγομένας αὐτοῖς καὶ δεδοικὼς μή τινες τῶν μαθητῶν ἐντεῦθεν θορυβηθῶσι, γράφων ἔλεγεν · "Ἔπεμψα ὑμῖν Τιμόθεον εἰς τὸ

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μηδένα σαίνεσθαι ἐν ταῖς θλίψεσι ταύταις · αὐτοὶ γὰρ οἴδατε ὅτι εἰς τοῦτο κείμεθα." Ὁ δὲ λέγει τοιοῦτόν ἐστιν.

5. Οὗτος ἡμῶν ὁ βίος, αὕτη τῆς ἀποστολικῆς πολιτείας ἡ ἀκολουθία, τὸ μυρία πάσχειν κακά. "Εἰς τοῦτο γὰρ κείμεθα," φησί. Τί ἐστιν · "Εἰς τοῦτο κείμεθα" ; Ὥσπερ τὰ ὤνια εἰς τοῦτο παρῆκται εἰς τὸ πωλεῖσθαι, οὕτω καὶ ὁ ἀποστολικὸς βίος εἰς τὸ λοιδορεῖσθαι καὶ εἰς τὸ πάσχειν κακῶς, εἰς τὸ μηδέποτε ἀναπνεῖν, εἰς τὸ μηδεμίαν ἔχειν ἀνακωχήν. 6. Καὶ ὅσοι νήφουσιν, οὐ μόνον οὐδὲν ἐντεῦθεν βλάπτονται, ἀλλὰ καὶ μειζόνως γενναίως, θαυμάζει · καὶ περὶ ἑτέρων δὲ ταῦτα λέγει ὅτι μετὰ τὰ δεσμὰ αὐτοῦ καὶ τὰς ἀλύσεις περισσοτέρως ἐτόλμων ἀφόβως τὸν λόγον λαλεῖν.

7. Τί δαὶ ἐπὶ Μωυσέως, εἰπέ μοι ; ἐν μέσῃ βαρβάρων χώρᾳ οὐκ ἀφῆκεν ὁ Θεὸς καὶ μάγους τὰ αὐτῶν ἐπιδείξασθαι ; οὐχὶ καὶ ταύτης μέμνηται τῆς ἱστορίας ὁ Παῦλος ; "Ὃν τρόπον δὲ Ἰαννῆς καὶ Ἰαμβρῆς, φησίν, ἀντέστησαν Μωυσεῖ, οὕτω καὶ οὗτοι ἀντιστήσονται τῇ ἀληθείᾳ." Οὗτος οὐδέποτε ἐπέλιπεν οὔτε τὰ σκάνδαλα, οὔτε οἱ στεφανούμενοι διὰ τούτων. Ταῦτ' οὖν ἅπαντα λογίζου καὶ μὴ ταῦτα μόνον, ἀλλὰ καὶ ὅσον κέρδος ἀπὸ τοῦ πράγματος γέγονε.

8. Κἀκεῖνο σκόπει ὅτι καὶ ἕτεροί τινές εἰσιν ἀπόρρητοι λόγοι τούτων · οὐ γὰρ ἅπαντα εἰδέναι ἡμᾶς δυνατόν · καὶ ὅτι τὰ χρηστότερα ἀπαντήσεται μετὰ ταῦτα καὶ πλειών ἡ παραδοξοποιΐα · ὥσπερ οὖν ἐπὶ τοῦ Ἰωσὴφ ἡ μὲν ἀρχὴ δυσκολίαν εἶχε καὶ μέχρι πολλοῦ προῆει τὰ πράγματα, ἀπεναντίας εἶναι δοκοῦντα τῇ ὑποσχέσει · ὕστερον δὲ μειζονα

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τῶν προσδοκηθέντων ἐγένετο. Καὶ ἐπὶ τοῦ σταυροῦ δὲ οὐκ εὐθέως, οὐδὲ ἐν προοιμίοις καὶ ἐν ἀρχῇ τὸ κατόρθωμα ἅπαν ἐβλάστησεν, ἀλλὰ τὸ μὲν σκάνδαλον προῆει καὶ ὀλίγα τινὰ γέγονε σημεῖα θαύματος ἕνεκεν καὶ τῆς διορθώσεως τῶν ταῦτα τολμησάντων καὶ εὐθέως ἅπαντα παρέδραμεν. 9. Εἰ γὰρ καὶ τὸ καταπέτασμα ἐσχίσθη τοῦ ναοῦ τότε καὶ πέτραι ἐρράγησαν καὶ ἥλιος ἐσκοτίσθη, ἀλλὰ ταῦτα ἐν μιᾷ ἡμέρᾳ καὶ ἐν φυγῇ οἱ ἀπόστολοι, ἐν διώξεσι, ἐν πολέμοις, ἐν ἐπιβουλαῖς, λανθάνοντες, κρυπτόμενοι, δεδοικότες, οὕτω τὸν λόγον ἐκήρυττον · καὶ ἐν δυναστείᾳ πολλῇ τῶν Ἰουδαίων ὁ δῆμος, ἀγόντων, περιαγόντων, ἑλκόντων, σπαραττόντων τοὺς πιστεύοντας. Καὶ γὰρ τοὺς ἄρχοντας μεθ ' ἑαυτῶν ἔχοντες, καθ' ἑκάστην ἡμέραν ἦγον καὶ περιῆγον τοὺς ἀποστόλους. 10. Καὶ τί λέγω τῶν Ἰουδαίων τὸν δῆμον καὶ ἄρχοντας ; Εἷς σκηνορράφος, περὶ δέρματα ἠσχολημένος, ὁ Παῦλος -- τί δὲ σκηνορράφου εὐτελέστερον ; -- τοσαύτῃ ἐκέχρητο τῇ μανίᾳ ὡς σύρειν ἄνδρας καὶ γυναῖκας καὶ παραδιδόναι εἰς φυλακήν · καὶ ὁ σταυρωθεὶς ἠνείχετο ταῦτα ὁρῶν. Ἀλλὰ ὅρα πῶς μετὰ ταῦτα οὗτός τε ὁ διώκτης πάντας ὑπερηκόντισε καὶ τὸ πρᾶγμα ὑπὲρ τὸν ἥλιον διέλαμψε καὶ πᾶσαν κατέσχε τὴν οἰκουμένην.

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Chapter Twenty

Even in the time of the apostles, worse things came to pass.

1. Therefore, don't let any of these events shock you, neither a priest who has gone bad and in his wickedness springs at the flock more savagely than a wolf, nor one of those who exercise power, displaying great cruelty. Consider that in the times of the apostles even worse things than these came to pass. 2. For the person who was then in power was the mystery of iniquity[1] -- for this is what Paul named him -- practicing every kind of evil and having surpassed all by his iniquity. But he injured neither the Church, nor those noble men. Instead, he caused them to shine to an even brighter degree. Some priests of the Jews were so wicked and good-for-nothing that Christ commanded the people to shun the imitation of their style of life. 3. "The scribes and Pharisees are seated upon the chair of Moses," says the Savior. "Therefore, do everything that they tell you to do. But don't act according to their own works."[2] And indeed, what could be more evil than priests whose emulation would destroy those imitating them? But even though such as these were in positions of power in the

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[1] cf. 2 Thessalonians 2: 7.

[2] cf. Matthew 23: 2-3.

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time of the apostles, those who shined forth in their faith, those who had been crowned, were in no way harmed. Rather, they received honor upon honor. Accordingly, there is no need to be astonished by the events which are presently occurring. Indeed, trials from every direction are coupled to those who are vigilant, from both their friends and relations and from strangers. 4. This is why Paul, seeing the clouds of dangers gathering over them and fearing that some of the disciples might be troubled by this, when writing to them said: "I sent Timothy to you so that no one is upset by these tribulations. For you yourselves know that we are destined for this."[3] What Paul wants to say is this: 5. This is our life, that is, the natural consequence of an apostolic way of life is to suffer countless evils. "For we are destined for this," he says. What does "we are destined for this" mean? Just as goods for sale are brought forth to be sold, so the apostolic life is purposely designed to endure abuse, to suffer evils, to never have a respite, to never have a cessation of hostilities. 6. And for however many are vigilant, they are not only not harmed by these events, but instead profit even more from them. This is why Paul voices his admiration, after learning that they have nobly stood their ground. And concerning others, he says that after his bonds

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[3] cf. 1 Thessalonians 3: 2-3.

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and chains they were even more bold in fearlessly speaking the word. 7. What, then, was going on in the time of Moses? Tell me what you think. In the midst of a barbarian land, didn't God permit the magicians to demonstrate their arts? Doesn't Paul remember this narrative? He states that "in the same manner that Jannes and Jambres opposed Moses, so these people will resist the truth."[4] This one never lacked stumbling blocks, nor those who were crowned because of them. Therefore, reflect on all these matters, and not only on these things, but also on the great gain which occurred because of what happened. 8. And consider that there are other mysterious reasons behind these events -- for it is not possible for us to know everything -- and that things will turn out for the better after these events and that the wonder will be even greater. In the same way, in the time of Joseph circumstances were quite difficult at the beginning, and for a long time events were proceeding in a manner that appeared to be contrary to the promise. And yet later they proved to be beyond all expectation. When the crucifixion occurred it was not immediately, at the beginning and commencement, that the event bore its fruit. Rather, at that time the cross was a stumbling block. Only a few signs occurred to produce wonder and to correct those who had dared to do these things, but immediately all these

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[4] 2 Timothy 3: 8a

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things passed away. 9. For if the curtain of the temple was torn in two at that time, if rocks shattered, if the sun was darkened, all these events occurred in one day and most people quickly forgot them. Immediately after these events the apostles were subject to exile, pursuits, battles, and plots. They were trying to elude notice, were hiding themselves, and were in a state of fear. This is the condition in which they preached the word. The nation of the Jews exercised its great power in carrying off, hunting down, dragging away, and tearing into pieces those who believed. For they had the governmental authorities on their side. Daily they were carrying off and hunting down the apostles. 10. And why should I speak about the nation of the Jews and the governmental authorities? One tent-maker, a person occupied with hides as his business, Paul -- who could be more simple than a tent-maker? -- was seized with such a madness so as to drag away by force men and women and deliver them into prison. And the one who had been crucified, observing these events, allowed them to take place. But note how after these things the very person who was a persecutor surpassed all the disciples, and how his work shined brighter than the sun and conquered the entire world.

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Κεφ. κα΄. Ὅτι καὶ ἐν τῇ παλαιᾷ καὶ ἐν τῇ καινῇ πολλοὶ οἱ πειρασμοί

1. Εἰ δὲ λέγοις · "Καὶ τίνος ἕνεκεν καὶ ἐν τῇ Παλαιᾷ καὶ ἐν τῇ Καινῇ τοσοῦτοι κίνδυνοι, τοσοῦτοι πειρασμοί, τοσαῦται ἐπιβουλαί ;" μάνθανε καὶ τὴν αἰτίαν. Τίς οὖν ἡ αἰτιά ; Παλαίστρα ὁ παρὼν βίος ἐστί, γυμνάσιον καὶ ἀγών, χωνευτήριον, βαφεῖον ἀρετῆς. Ὥσπερ οὖν οἱ σκυτοδέψαι τὰ δέρματα λαμβάνοντες στύφουσι πρότερον, κατατείνουσι, παίουσι καὶ τοίχοις καὶ λίθοις προσαράσσοντες καὶ ἑτέραις μυρίαις θεραπείαις αὐτὰ ποιήσαντες ἐπιτήδεια πρὸς τὴν ὑποδοχὴν τῆς βαφῆς, οὕτω τὸ χρῶμα τὸ τίμιον ἐπάγουσιν · 2. οἵ τε χρυσοχόοι τὸ χρυσίον εἰς τὸ πῦρ ἐμβάλλοντες, τῇ βασάνῳ τῆς καμίνου παραδιδόασιν, ὥστε ποιῆσαι καθαρώτατον · οἵ τε παιδοτρίβαι, ἐν τῇ παλαίστρᾳ πολλοῖς πόνοις τοὺς ἀθλοῦντας γυμνάζουσι, τῶν ἀντιπάλων σφοδρότερον αὐτοῖς ἐμπίπτοντες, ἵνα ἐν τῇ γυμνασίᾳ τὸ πᾶν κατορθώσαντες ἐν τοῖς αὐτῶν σώμασιν, ἐπὶ τῶν ἀγώνων εὐτρεπεῖς ὦσι καὶ παρεσκευασμένοι πρὸς τὰς λαβὰς τῶν ἐχθρῶν καὶ ῥᾳδίως αὐτὰς διαλύσωσιν, οὕτω καὶ ὁ θεὸς ἐν τῷ παρόντι βίῳ ποιεῖ. 3. Πρὸς ἀρετὴν ἐπιτηδείαν βουλόμενος μετασκευάσαι τὴν ψυχήν, καὶ στύφει καὶ χωνεύει καὶ βασάνῳ πειρασμῶν παραδίδωσιν, ὥστε τοὺς τε ἀναπεπτωκότας καὶ διαλελυμένους σφιγγῆναι, τούς τε δοκίμους δοκιμωτέρους γενέσθαι καὶ ἀχειρώτους ταῖς τῶν δαιμόνων ἐπιβουλαῖς καὶ ταῖς τοῦ διαβόλου παγίσι, καὶ σφόδρα ἐπιτηδείους πρὸς τὴν τῶν μελλόντων ἀγαθῶν ὑποδοχὴν ἅπαντας.

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4. Ἀνὴρ γάρ, φησίν, ἀπείραστος, ἀδόκιμος · καὶ ὁ Παῦλος · "Ἡ θλῖψις ὑπομονὴν κατεργάζεται · ἡ δὲ ὑπομονὴ δοκιμήν." Καρτερικοὺς οὖν καὶ ὑπομονητικοὺς ποιῆσαι θέλων, ἀφίησι τὸ νόμισμα διακωδωνίζεσθαι παντὶ τρόπῳ.

5. Ταύτης ἕνεκεν τῆς αἰτίας καὶ τὸν Ἰὼβ ἀφῆκε παθεῖν ἅπερ ἔπαθεν, ὥστε καὶ δοκιμώτερον φανῆναι καὶ ἐμφράξαι τοῦ διαβόλου τὸ στόμα · διὰ τοῦτο καὶ τοὺς ἀποστόλους ἀφῆκεν ὥστε κἀκείνους ἀνδρειοτέρους γενέσθαι καὶ τὴν οἰκείαν δύναμιν ταύτῃ ἐπιδείξασθαι. Καὶ γὰρ καὶ αὕτη αἰτία οὐ μικρά. Διὸ καὶ Παύλῳ ἔλεγε ζητοῦντι ἄνεσιν καὶ ἀπαλλαγὴν τῶν κατεχόντων κακῶν · "Ἀρκεῖ σοι ἡ χάρις μου · ἡ γὰρ δύναμίς μου ἐν ἀσθενείᾳ τελειοῦται."

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Chapter Twenty One

There were many trials in the Old Testament and the New Testament.

1. But if you should say: "Why are there so many dangers in the Old and New Testaments, so many trials, so many snares?," learn the cause. What, then, is the reason? The present life is a wrestling school, a gymnasium, a battle, a smelting furnace, and a dyer's house of virtue. Therefore, just as tanners grasp the hides and first work them vigorously, stretching, striking, and dashing them against walls and rocks, and by countless other treatments render them fit for the reception of the dye -- in this way they bring out the prized color; 2. just as goldsmiths throw the gold into the fire to purify it, delivering it over to the testing of the furnace; just as coaches train the athletes in the wrestling schools with much hard work, attacking them more viciously than their opponents, so that every part of their bodies might be adequately prepared by exercise for the grasps of their enemies and for an easy escape; so in the same way God acts in the present life. 3. Desiring to transform the soul into a serviceable condition for virtue, he works it, melts it, and delivers it over to testing of trials, in order to strengthen those who have lost heart and who have let themselves go, in order

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that those who have already been tested might be even more approved and unconquered by the plots of the demons and the snares of the devil, completely worthy for the reception of the good things to come. 4. As one says, "An untested man is a worthless man." And Paul writes: "And tribulation produces patient endurance, and patient endurance proven character."[1] Therefore, desiring to create steadfast and patiently enduring people, God allows the coin to be tried by every means. 5. It is for the sake of this very reason that he allowed Job to suffer what he suffered, so as to appear even more approved and to stop up the mouth of the devil. Because of this he also sent forth the apostles, so that they might become more courageous and in this demonstrate his own power. Now this is no small reason. Thus, he was also saying to Paul as he sought an abatement and deliverance from the evils troubling him: "My grace is sufficient for you. For my power is perfected in weakness."[2]

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[1] Romans 5: 3-4

[2] 2 Corinthians 12: 9a

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Κεφ. κβ΄. Ὅτι καὶ τοὺς εὐγνωμόνως δικάζοντας οὐ μόνον οὐ σκανδαλίζει ἀλλὰ καὶ ὠφελεῖ τὰ τῶν πειρασμῶν, κἂν Ἕλληνες τύχωσιν ὄντες

1. Καὶ γὰρ οὐ μηδέπω τῷ λόγῳ τοῦ Χριστιανισμοῦ προσελθόντες καὶ ἐντεῦθεν μειζόνως, ἐάν νήφωσι, κερδαίνουσι. Καὶ γάρ ὅταν ἴδωσιν ἀδικουμένους, λοιδορουμένους, δεσμωτήριον οἰκοῦντας, ἐπηρεαζομένους, ἐπιβουλευομένους, ἀποτεμνομένους, καιομένους, καταποντιζομένους καὶ μηδενὶ τῶν δεινῶν εἴκοντας, ἐννόησον ὅσον ἔχοντες θαῦμα τῶν παραδόξων τούτων ἀθλητῶν ἀπήρχοντο καὶ οἱ τότε καὶ οἱ νῦν, ὥστε οὐ μόνον οὐκ ἐργάζεται σκάνδαλον τὰ γεγενημένα τοῖς νήφουσιν, ἀλλὰ καὶ πλείονος διδασκαλίας ὑπόθεσις γίνεται.

2. Διὸ καὶ Παῦλος ἤκουσε ταῦτα, ὅτι · " Ἡ δύναμίς μου ἐν ἀσθενείᾳ τελειοῦται." Τοῦτο καὶ ἐπὶ τῆς Παλαιᾶς καὶ ἐπὶ τῆς Καινῆς ἔστιν εὑρεῖν. Ἐννόησον γὰρ τί πάσχειν εἰκὸς ἦν τὸν Ναβουχοδονόσορ ὑπὸ τριῶν παίδων, δούλων, αἰχμαλώτων, δεδεμένων, πυρπολουμένων, τοσούτου στρατοπέδου παρόντος ἡττώμενον καὶ μὴ δυνάμενον τριῶν περιγενέσθαι σωμάτων δεδουλωμένων, ὑποκειμένων, πατρίδος ἐκπεπτωκότων, ἐλευθερίας, τιμῆς, δυναστείας, χρημάτων, πόρρω τῶν οἰκείων ἀπῳκισμένων. Εἰ δὴ μὴ συνεχωρήθη ὁ ἐμπρησμὸς ἐκεῖνος, οὐκ ἂν οὕτω λαμπρὸν τὸ βραβεῖον ἐγένετο, οὐκ ἂν οὕτω φαιδρὸς ὁ στέφανος.

3. Ἐννόησον τί πάσχειν εἰκὸς ἦν τὸν Ἡρῴδην ὑπὸ δεσμώτου ἐλεγχόμενον καὶ ὁρῶντα οὐδὲ ἀπὸ τῆς αὐλύσεως ἐνδιδόντα τῇ

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παρρησίᾳ, ἀλλ᾽ αἱρούμενον σφαγῆναι μᾶλλον ἢ προέσθαι τὴν καλλίστην ἐλευθεροστομίαν ἐκείνην. 4. Ἐννόησον τίς ὁρῶν ταῦτα καὶ ἀκούων καὶ τῶν τότε ζώντων καὶ τῶν μετὰ ταῦτα γενομένων, κἂν σφόδρα ἀναπεπτωκὼς ᾖ, νοῦν δέ τινα ἔχων βραχύν, πῶς τὰ μέγιστα κερδάνας ἄπεισι. Μὴ γάρ μοι τὰ καθάρματα τῶν ἀνοήτων εἴπῃς, τοὺς βλᾶκας καὶ αὐτόσαρκας ὄντας καὶ φύλλων κουφοτέρους. Οὗτοι γὰρ οὐχὶ τούτοις μόνον, ἀλλὰ καὶ παντὶ σχεδὸν γενομένῳ προσπταίουσιν · ὡς καὶ ὁ Ἰουδαίων δῆμος καὶ μάννα ἐσθίων καὶ ἄρτον, οὕτω δυσάρεστος ἦν, καὶ ἐν Αἰγύπτῳ ᾧν καὶ ἀπαλλαγεὶς Αἰγύπτου καὶ παρόντος Μωυσέως καὶ ἀπελθόντος.

5. Ἀλλ᾽ ἐκείνους εἰς μέσον ἄγε μοι, τοὺς νηφοντας, τοὺς ἐγρηγορότας καὶ λογίζου πόσην εἰκὸς αὐτοὺς ἐντεῦθεν καρπώσασθαι τὴν ὠφέλειαν, ὁρῶντας ψυχὴν ἀπερίτρεπτον, φρόνημα ἀδούλωτον, γλῶτταν παρρησίας γέμουσαν, ἄνθρωπον ἐρημοπολίτην βασιλέως περιγενόμενον, δεσμούμενον καὶ οὐκ ἐνδιδόντα, ἀποτεμνόμενον καὶ οὐ σιωπῶντα · καὶ μηδὲ μέχρι τούτων στῇς, ἀλλὰ καὶ τὰ μετὰ ταῦτα ἐξέταζε.

6. Ἀπέτεμεν ὁ Ἡρῴδης, ἀπετμήθη ὁ Ἰωάννης. Τίς οὖν ἐστιν ἐν τοῖς ἁπάντων μακαρισμοῖς ; τίς ζηλωτός ; τίς ἀνακηρύττεται ; τίς στεφανοῦται ; τίς ἐγκωμιάζεται ; τίς ἐπαινεῖται ; τίς θαυμάζεται ; τίς μέχρι σήμερον ἐλέγχει ;

7. Οὐ καθ᾽ ἑκάστην Ἐκκλησίαν ὁ μὲν βοᾷ · "Οὐκ ἔξεστί σοι ἔχειν τὴν γυναῖκα Φιλίππου τοῦ ἀδελφοῦ σου ·" ὁ δὲ στηλιτεύεται καὶ μετὰ τελευτὴν ἐπὶ τῇ μοιχείᾳ καὶ τῇ παρανομίᾳ καὶ τῇ θρασύτητι ; Σκόπει δὲ μετὰ τῶν εἰρημένων,

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ὅση τοῦ δεσμώτου ἡ δύναμις καὶ τοῦ τυράννου ἡ ἀσθένεια.

8. Ὁ μὲν γὰρ οὐκ ἴσχυσε μίαν ἐπιστομίσαι γλῶτταν, ἀλλ᾽ ἀνελὼν αὐτήν, μυρία ἀντ᾽ ἐκείνης καὶ μετ᾽ ἐκείνης ἠνεῴξε στόματα· ὁ δὲ καὶ τότε αὐτὸν εὐθέως ἐφοβησε μετὰ τὴν σφαγήν -- οὕτω γὰρ αὐτοῦ τὸ συνειδὸς κατέσειεν ὁ φόβος, ὡς νομίζειν αὐτὸν τότε καὶ ἐκ νεκρῶν ἀναστάντα θαυματουργεῖν --, καὶ νῦν δὲ καὶ ἐξ ἐκείνου διὰ παντὸς τοῦ χρόνου κατὰ πᾶσαν αὐτὸν ἐλέγχει τὴν οἰκουμένην καὶ δι᾽ ἑαυτοῦ καὶ δι᾽ ἑτέρων.

9. Ἕκαστος γὰρ τὸ Εὐαγγέλιον ἀναγινώσκων τοῦτο, λέγει· "Οὐκ ἔξεστί σοι ἔχειν τὴν γυναῖκα Φιλίππου τοῦ ἀδελφοῦ σου"· καὶ τοῦ Εὐαγγελίου χωρὶς ἐν συλλόγοις καὶ συνουσίαις, ταῖς οἴκοι, ταῖς ἐν ἀγορᾷ, ταῖς ἁπανταχοῦ, κἂν εἰς τὴν Περσῶν χώραν ἀπέλθῃς, κἂν εἰς τὴν Ἰνδῶν, κἂν εἰς τὴν Μαύρων, κἂν ὅσην ἥλιος ἐφορᾷ γῆν καὶ πρὸς αὐτὰς τὰς ἐσχατιάς, ταύτης ἀκούσῃς τῆς φωνῆς καὶ ὄψει τὸν δίκαιον ἐκεῖνον ἔτι καὶ νῦν βοῶντα, ἐνηχοῦντα καὶ τὴν κακιάν ἐλέγχοντα τοῦ τυράννου καὶ οὐδέποτε σιγῶντα, οὐδὲ τῷ πληθει τοῦ χρόνου τὸν ἔλεγχον μαραινόμενον.

10. Τί τοίνυν ἀπὸ τῆς τελευτῆς παρεβλάβη ὁ δίκαιος ἐκεῖνος; τί δὲ ἀπὸ τοῦ βιαίου θανάτου; τί δὲ ἀπὸ τῆς ἁλύσεως; τί δὲ ἀπὸ τοῦ δεσμωτηρίου; Τίνας δὲ οὐκ ὠφθωσε τῶν νοῦν ἐχόντων, ἀφ᾽ ὧν εἶπεν, ἀφ᾽ ὧν ἔπαθεν, ἀφ᾽ ὧν ἔτι καὶ νῦν κηρύττει τὰ αὐτὰ ἅ καὶ τότε ζῶν; Μὴ τοίνυν λέγε· "Διὰ τί συνεχωρήθη ἀποθανεῖν;" Οὐ γὰρ θάνατος ἦν, ἀλλὰ στέφανος τὸ γεγενημένον, οὐ τελευτή, ἀλλὰ μείζονος ζωῆς

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προοίμια. Μάθε φιλοσοφεῖν καὶ οὐ μόνον οὐδὲν ἐκ τῶν τοιούτων βλαβήσῃ, ἀλλὰ καὶ τὰ μέγιστα κερδανεῖς.

11. Τί δὲ ἡ Αἰγυπτία γυνή ; Οὐ κατηγόρησεν ; οὐκ ἐσυκοφάντησεν ; οὐκ ἔδησε τὸν δίκαιον ; οὐκ εἰς δεσμωτήριον ἐνέβαλεν ; οὐ τὸν περὶ τῶν ἐσχάτων ἐπεκρέμασεν αὐτῷ κίνδυνον ; οὐκ ἀνεῖλε, τό γε εἰς αὐτὴν ἧκον ; οὐ πονηρὰν περιέθηκε δόξαν ; Τί οὖν αὐτὸν παρέβλαψεν ἢ τότε, ἢ νῦν ; Καθάπερ γὰρ πυρὸς ἄνθρακες ὑπὸ ἀχύρων καλυφθέντες, παρὰ μὲν τὴν ἀρχὴν σκιάζεσθαι δοκοῦσιν, ἀθρόον δὲ διαφαγόντες τὰ ἐπικείμενα, δι᾽ αὐτῶν ἐκείνων τῶν ἀχύρων ὑψηλοτέραν ἀνάπτουσι τὴν φλόγα · οὕτω δὴ καὶ ἡ ἀρετή, κἂν ἐπηρεάζεσθαι δοκῇ, ὕστερον δὴ δι᾽ αὐτῶν τῶν κωλυμάτων μειζόνως ἀνθεῖ καὶ εἰς αὐτὸν φθάνει τὸν οὐρανόν.

12. Τί γὰρ μακαριώτερον γένοιτ᾽ ἂν τοῦ νεανίσκου ἐκείνου διὰ τὴν συκοφαντίαν, διὰ τὴν ἐπιβουλήν, οὐ διὰ τὸν θρόνον τὸν ἐν Αἰγύπτῳ, οὐδὲ διὰ τὴν ἐκεῖ βασιλείαν ; Πανταχοῦ γὰρ τοῖς πάθεσιν αἱ δόξαι καὶ αἱ εὐδοκιμήσεις καὶ οἱ στέφανοί εἰσι συγκεκληρῶμένοι. Οὐχὶ καὶ τοῦτον πάντες πανταχοῦ τῆς οἰκουμένης ᾄδουσι ; 13. Καὶ χρόνου τοσούτου πλῆθος οὐκ ἐμάρανεν αὐτοῦ τὴν μνήμην, ἀλλὰ τῶν βασιλικῶν εἰκόνων λαμπρότερόν τε καὶ διαρκέστερον αἱ τῆς ἀρετῆς καὶ τῆς σωφροσύνης αὐτοῦ πανταχοῦ τῆς οἰκουμένης ἀνάκεινται εἰκόνες, ἐν τῇ Ῥωμαίων, ἐν τῇ βαρβάρων χώρᾳ, ἐν τῷ ἑκάστου συνειδότι, ἐν τῇ ἑκάστου γλώττῃ. 14. Καὶ ὁρῶμεν αὐτὸν ἅπαντες κατεχόμενον, ἀρχόμενον, συμβουλεύοντα τῇ ἀθλίᾳ καὶ ταλαιπώρῳ πόρνῃ τὰ δέοντα καὶ τὰ παρ᾽ ἑαυτοῦ πάντα

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εἰσφέροντα εἰς τὴν ἐκείνης σωτηρίαν, ἐντρέποντα αὐτῆς τὴν ἀναισχυντίαν, σβεννύντα τὴν κάμινον, χειμῶνος ἐξαρπάσαι ἐπιχειροῦντα χαλεποῦ καὶ εἰς τὴν γαλήνην ὁρμίζοντα · εἶτα ἐπειδὴ τὸ κλυδώνιον ὑπερέσχε καὶ ὑπέραντλον τὸ πλοῖον γέγονε, ναυαγούσης ἐκείνης, φεύγοντα τὰ κύματα καὶ ἐπὶ τὴν στερεὰν τῆς σωφροσύνης πέτραν τρέχοντα καὶ τὰ ἱμάτια ἐν ταῖς ἐκείνης καταλιμπάνοντα χερσὶ καὶ τῶν τὰς πορφυρίδας περιβεβλημένων λαμπρότερον ἐν τῇ γυμνότητι φαινόμενον καὶ καθάπερ ἀριστέα τινὰ καὶ τροπαιοῦχον φαιδρὸν, τὸ τρόπαιον ἱστῶντα τῆς σωφροσύνης.

15. Καὶ οὐδὲ ἐν τούτοις καταλύομεν τὴν μνήμην, ἀλλὰ περαιτέρω προϊόντες, ὁρῶμεν αὐτὸν πάλιν εἰς δεσμωτήριον ἀπαγόμενον, δεδεμένον, αὐχμῶντα, πολὺν ἐκεῖ τηκόμενον χρόνον. Καὶ διὰ ταῦτα μάλιστα θαυμάζομεν πάλιν αὐτόν, μακαρίζομεν, ἐκπληττόμεθα, ἐπαινοῦμεν. Κἂν σώφρων τις ᾖ, ἐννοῶν αὐτὸν σωφρονέστερος γίνεται · κἂν ἀκόλαστος, τάχιον τῷ διηγήματι πρὸς σωφροσύνην μεθίσταται καὶ ὑπὸ τῆς ἱστορίας ἀμείνων καθίσταται. 16. Ταῦτα τοίνυν ἅπαντα ἀναλέγοντες, μηδὲν θορυβεῖσθε, ἀλλὰ καὶ κερδαίνετε ἐκ τῶν γινομένων · καὶ ἡ τῶν ἀθλούντων ὑπομονὴ γινέσθω καρτερίας ὑμῖν διδάσκαλος καὶ πάντα τὸν βίον τῶν γενναίων καὶ ὑψηλῶν ἀνδρῶν ὁρῶντες διὰ τοιούτων ὑφαινόμενον, μὴ συγχεῖσθε, μηδὲ ταράττεσθε, μήτε τοῖς ἰδίοις, μήτε τοῖς κοινοῖς πειρασμοῖς · καὶ γὰρ καὶ ἡ Ἐκκλησία ἐξ ἀρχῆς οὕτως ἐτράφη, οὕτως ηὐξήθη. Μηδὲν οὖν ξενίζεσθε · οὐδὲν γὰρ ἀπεικὸς γέγονεν.

17. Ἀλλ' ὥσπερ ἐπὶ τῶν βιωτικῶν, οὐκ ἔνθα ἄχυρα καὶ

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χόρτος, οὐδὲ ἔνθα ἄμμος, ἀλλ᾽ ἔνθα χρυσίον καὶ μαργαρῖται, ἐκεῖ πειραταὶ καὶ καταποντισταὶ καὶ λῃσταὶ καὶ τοιχωρύχοι συνεχῶς ἐνοχλοῦσι καὶ ἐπιβουλεύουσιν, οὕτω καὶ ὁ διάβολος ἔνθα ἂν ἴδῃ πλοῦτον συναγόμενον τὸν κατὰ ψυχὴν καὶ εὐπορίαν εὐσεβείας ἐπιτεινομένην, ἐκεῖ τὰ μηχανήματα ἱστησι καὶ προσάγει. Ἀλλ᾽ ἐὰν οἱ ἐπιβουλευόμενοι νήφωσιν, οὐ μόνον οὐδὲν ἐλαττοῦνται ἐντεῦθεν, ἀλλὰ καὶ μειζονα τὸν πλοῦτον τῆς ἀρετῆς συνάγουσιν · ὃ δὴ καὶ νῦν γέγονε.

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Chapter Twenty Two

Trials not only do not scandalize those who are reasonably disposed as they judge matters, but are actually beneficial for them, even if they should happen to be Greeks.

1. For even those who have not yet drawn close to the word of the gospel still benefit greatly from these trials if they are alert. Indeed, when they see people being treated unjustly, slandered, living in prison, abused, plotted against, beheaded, burned alived, drowned, and not drawing back before any of these dangers, consider how great is the admiration people both then and now offered to these extraordinary spiritual athletes. Not only do these events not create a stumbling block for those who are alert, but they become an opportunity for an even fuller instruction.
2. It is for this reason that Paul heard these words: "For my power is perfected in weakness."[1] This principle is found in both the Old and the New Testaments. Note what Nebuchadnezzar must have suffered before his own army as he was defeated by three children who were slaves, captives, bound, and thrown into the fire; he was unable to overcome three people who were enslaved, at his mercy, deprived of their homeland, freedom, honor, power, possessions, and far

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[1] 2 Corinthians 12: 9a

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removed from their close relations. If that conflagration had not been permitted, there would not have been such a radiant recompense, nor such a brilliant crown.
3. Contemplate what it is likely that Herod suffered, reproved for his sins by a convicted prisoner, as he saw that John was not flagging in boldness because of his chains, but rather preferred to suffer death than to give up that most noble freedom of speech. 4. Think about someone seeing and hearing about these things, whether it be someone living at that time or after these things had occurred --even if one had completely lost heart -- provided he had even limited intelligence, how could he fail to gain the greatest profit? Don't talk to me about the off-scourings of the mindless -- those who are stupid, utterly carnal, and lighter than leaves. For these not only stumble over these things, but over nearly everything that has come to pass, just like the Jewish nation, who eating manna and bread, were equally difficult to please, whether they were in Egypt or away from Egypt, whether Moses was with them or away from them. 5. Instead, bring me those who are vigilant, those who are watchful, and ponder how without a doubt they have reaped a tremendous benefit from these examples: observing an invincible soul, an unenslaved mind, a tongue filled with bold confidence, a citizen of the desert prevailing over a king, living in prison but not abandoned, beheaded but not silenced. And do not stop here, but also search out the

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things which happened afterwards. 6. Herod cut off a head. John was beheaded. Who, then, is the one who is blessed by all? Who is the one who arouses our envy? Who is proclaimed? Who is crowned? Who is lauded? Who is praised? Who is admired? Who up to this very day refutes false arguments? 7. On the one hand, does not one shout out every day in the Church: "It is not lawful for you to have the wife of Philip your brother"? On the other hand, isn't Herod denounced, even after his death, on account of his adultery, law breaking, and audaciousness? Now after what we have said, pay attention to the power of the one who was in prison and the weakness of the tyrant. 8. Herod was not strong enough to silence one tongue. Having removed it, he opened up countless other mouths in its place and with its help. As for John, he immediately inspired fear in Herod after his murder -- for fear was disturbing his conscience to such an extent that he believed John had been raised from the dead and was performing miracles -- and in our own day and through all succeeding time, throughout all the world he refutes him through himself and through others. 9. For each person reading this Gospel says: "It is not lawful for you to have the wife of Philip your brother."[2] And even apart from reading the Gospel, in assemblies and meetings at home or in the market, in every place, even if

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[2] Cf. Matthew 14: 4.

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you should go off to Persia, India, and to the land of the Moors, to anywhere in the world under the sun, even to the very ends of the earth, you will hear this voice and see that righteous man even now still crying out, resounding loudly and reproving the evil of the tyrant, never silenced nor the reproof at all weakened by the passing of time. 10. In what way, then, was that just man harmed by this end? In what way by this violent death? In what way by these chains? In what way by the imprisonment? Who are those he did not set back on their feet -- provided they had a contemplative disposition -- because of what he spoke, because of what he suffered, because of what he still proclaims in our own day, the same message he preached while he was living. Therefore, do not say: "Why was John allowed to die?" For what occurred was not a death, but a crown, not an end, but the beginning of a greater life. Learn to think and live like a Christian, and you will not only not be harmed by any of these events, but will reap the greatest benefits. 11. Now what about the Egyptian woman? Didn't she accuse Joseph? Didn't she slander him falsely? Didn't she fetter him with chains? Didn't she throw him into prison? Didn't she hang the worst of all possible dangers over his head? Didn't she work to destroy him, at least as far as it was possible for her to do so? Didn't she surround him with an evil reputation? In what way, though, did she harm him, either then or now? Just as burning coals

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covered by chaff first appear to be hidden and then suddenly burn through what has been placed upon them, actually kindling the flame even higher because of the chaff; so virtue, when it seems to be mistreated, later flowers to an even greater degree through the very obstacles themselves, reaching to heaven itself. 12. For who could be happier than that young man, thanks to the false accusation and the plot, and not because of the throne which he would occupy in Egypt nor on account of that kingdom? Indeed, in every way and everywhere the glory, good reputation, and crowns are linked to his sufferings. Doesn't everyone celebrate Joseph's praises all over the world? 13. And the length of time which has since passed has not extinguished his remembrance, but the images of his virtue and uprightness set up all over the world shine brighter and are more durable than the images of kings -- among the Romans, in foreign lands, in each individual conscience, on the tongue of each person. 14. We all see him bound as a prisoner, under subjection, counseling that wretched and miserable harlot as to what is truly needed, doing everything within his power for her salvation -- reproving her shamelessness, extinguishing the furnace, trying to rescue her from the danger of a fierce storm and to bring her into a peaceful harbor. Then, after the surging sea rose up and the ship was waterlogged, he flees from the waves as she suffers shipwreck and runs to the solid rock of discretion,

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abandoning his garments in her hands, shining more brilliantly in his nakedness than those clothed in purple, and like a kind of monument or shining trophy, sets up the trophy of his wisdom and self-control. 15. And in the events of today we do not cease to remember him, but as we proceed further we see him again carried off to prison, bound, living in squalid quarters, pining away there for a long time. It is especially because of these things that we again express our admiration for him, call him blessed, are besides ourselves with amazement, and praise him. Now if one is of a sound mind, he becomes even more wise by pondering the situation of Joseph. If one is undisciplined, the narration of Joseph's story will move him to alter his point of view toward a wiser and more self-controlled way of living, and he will end up a better person because he has heard it.

16. Therefore, in recounting all these things, don't be troubled, but rather profit from what has taken place. May the endurance of these spiritual athletes become a teacher of patient endurance for you. Seeing that the entire life of these noble and lofty men is woven through with these kinds of sufferings, don't be disturbed or alarmed -- neither by your own particular trials, nor those trials common to all. For the Church has been nourished from the very beginning in this fashion, and in this way has grown. Don't be surprized by anything, for nothing unnatural has

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occurred.

17. Just as in matters in this present life, it is not where there is chaff and hay, or sand, but rather where there is gold and pearls, that pirates, brigands,and thieves continually cause trouble and plan schemes; so too in like manner when the devil sees the wealth of the soul gathered together and an abundance of piety increased, it is there that he gets down to work and plies his machinations. But if those who are the objects of his schemes are alert, they will not only not be harmed in any way, but will rather gather together an even greater treasure of virtue. And this has taken place at the present time.

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Κεφ. κγ΄. Ὅτι μέγιστον σημεῖον τῆς εὐδοκιμήσεως τῆς Ἐκκλησίας τὸ γινόμενα καὶ πολλούς ταῦτα ὠφέλησεν

1. Καὶ μέγιστον ἂν τις τοῦτο σημεῖν καὶ τοῦ πλούτου τῶν κατορθωμάτων καὶ τῆς ἀνδρείας, τῆς Ἐκκλησίας ποιήσειεν. Ὅτε γὰρ εἶδεν αὐτὴν ὁ πονηρὸς δαίμων ἐκεῖνος ἀνθοῦσαν, εὐδοκιμοῦσαν, ἐν βραχείᾳ καιροῦ ῥοπῇ πρὸς ὕψος ἀνενεχθεῖσαν, πολλὴν σπουδὴν ἐν αὐτῇ γινομένην καὶ τ:ὴν μὲν τῶν εὐδοκιμούντων ἐπὶ τὸ βέλτιον ἐπίδοσιν, τῶν ἐν ἁμαρτιάις ζώντων τὴν εἰς μετάνοιαν μετάστασιν, πᾶσαν τὴν οἰκουμένην ἀπὸ τῆς πόλεως ταύτης κατηχουμένην · πάντα ἐκίνησεν αὐτοῦ τὰ μηχανήματα καὶ ἐμφυλίους ἀνῆψε πολέμους.

2. Καὶ καθάπερ ἐπὶ τοῦ Ἰώβ, νῦν μὲν τὴν ἀποβολὴν τῶν χρημάτων, νῦν δὲ τὴν ἀπαιδίαν, νῦν δὲ τὴν ἀρρωστιάν τοῦ σώματος, νῦν δὲ τῆς γυναικὸς τὴν γλῶτταν, νῦν δὲ τῶν φιλων τὰ ὀνείδη καὶ τὰ σκώμματα καὶ τὰς λοιδοριάς ἐκίνει κατὰ τοῦ δικαίου καὶ πᾶν εἶδος μηχανημάτων προσῆγεν · οὕτω καὶ ἐπὶ τῆς Ἐκκλησίας, διὰ φίλων, δι᾽ ἐχθρῶν, διὰ τῶν εἰς κλῆρον τελούντων, διὰ τῶν εἰς στρατείαν καταλεγομένων, διὰ τῶν ἐπισκοπῇ τετιμημένων, διὰ πολλῶν καὶ παντοδαπῶν προσώπων τὰ παρ᾽ ἑαυτοῦ ἐκίνησεν.

3. Ἀλλ᾽ ὅμως καὶ τοσαῦτα μηχανησάμενος, οὐ μόνον αὐτὴν οὐκ ἐσάλευσεν, ἀλλὰ καὶ λαμπροτέραν ἐποίησεν. Οὐ γὰρ οὕτω τότε μὴ ἐνοχλουμένη πάντας ἐπαίδευσεν ὡς νῦν τὴν οἰκουμένην διδάσκει καρτερεῖν, ἐγκρατεύεσθαι, φέρειν πειρασμούς, ὑπομονὴν ἐπιδείκνυσθαι, καταφρονεῖν τῶν βιωτικῶν, μηδὲν

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ἡγεῖσθαι πλοῦτον, καταγελᾶν τιμῆς, ὑπεροράν θανάτου, καταφρονεῖν ζωῆς, πατρίδα παροράν, οἰκείους, φίλους, συγγενεῖς, πρὸς σφαγὰς ἀποδύεσθαι παντοδαπάς, κατὰ ξιφῶν κυβιστᾶν, τὰ λαμπρὰ ἅπαντα τοῦ παρόντος βίου, τιμὰς λέγω καὶ δόξας καὶ δυναστείαν καὶ τρυφήν, τῶν ἠρινῶν ἀνθῶν εὐτελέστερα εἶναι νομίζειν.

4. Καὶ ταῦτα οὐχ εἷς παιδεύει μόνον, οὐδὲ δύο καὶ τρεῖς, ἀλλὰ πᾶς ὁ λαὸς καὶ οὐ διὰ ῥημάτων μόνον, ἀλλὰ καὶ διὰ πραγμάτων δὶ ὧν πάσχουσι, δι᾽ ὧν νικῶσι, δι᾽ ὧν περιγίνονται τῶν ἐπιβουλευόντων, δι᾽ ὧν ἀδάμαντος στερρότερον καὶ πέτρας ἰσχυρότερον ἅπαντα στέγουσιν, οὐκ ὅπλα κινοῦντες, οὐ πόλεμον ἀναρριπίζοντες, οὐ τόξον, οὐ βέλη ἀφιέντες, ἀλλ᾽ ὑπομονῆς τεῖχος ἕκαστος περιβεβλημένος, ἐμμελείας, πραότητος, ἀνδρείας, τῷ πάσχειν κακῶς τοὺς ποιοῦντας ἐκ πολλοῦ τοῦ περιόντος καταισχύνοντες.

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Chapter Twenty Three

The events which are presently occurring are a significant sign of the good reputation of the Church. They have benefited many.

1. One can consider present events as a sign of the wealth of virtues of the Church and of her courage. For when that evil demon saw her blossoming, held in esteem, raised up in such a short time, filled with great zeal, those who were already admired continuing to progress toward the better, the conversion of those living in sins to repentance, and the entire world instructed from this city, he set in motion all his machinations and kindled internecine wars. 2. Just as in the time of Job, Job experienced the loss of possessions, then the death of his children, ill health, and the tongue of his wife. The demon ignited the reproach, gibes, and railings of his friends against that righteous man and employed every kind of scheme; so in the time of the Church, the devil has set in motion through all kinds of people -- through friends, through enemies, through those reckoned among the clergy, through those called into the army, through those honored as bishops -- those things which come from him.

3. Nevertheless, though he had set so many traps, not only did he not shake the Church, but instead he made her more

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brilliant. For during the period when she was not troubled she did not teach the world as effectively as she now does to be patient, to practice self-restraint, to bear trials, to demonstrate steadfast endurance, to scorn the things of the present life, to pay no regard to riches, to laugh at honor, to pay no heed to death, to think lightly of life, to abandon homeland, households, friends, and close relations, to be prepared for all kinds of wounds, to throw oneself against the swords, to consider all the illustrious things of the present life -- I am speaking of honor, glories, power, and luxury -- as more fragile than the flowers of springtime. 4. It is not only one person who teaches these things, nor two or three, but an entire people, not only through words, but through their deeds; through what they suffer, through their victories, through the traps over which they prevail, through enduring all things, stronger than steel and harder than rock, without raising weapons or stirring up war, without shooting bow or dart. Instead, each is surrounded by the wall of endurance, diligence, gentleness, and courage, through his own ill-suffering showering shame on those inflicting it.

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Κεφ. κδ΄. Ὅτι οἱ ταῦτα παρανομήσαντες καὶ ἐντεῦθεν δίκην διδόασι

1. Νῦν γοῦν οὗτοι μὲν φαιδρῷ τῷ προσώπῳ, ἐλευθέροις τοῖς ὀφθαλμοῖς, παρρησίᾳ ἀφάτῳ κεχρημένοι, εἰς ἀγορὰν ἐμβάλλουσιν, ἐν οἰκίαις στρέφονται, πρὸς τὴν σύναξιν αὐτομολοῦσιν · οἱ δὲ ταῦτα ἐργασάμενοι, καθ᾽ ἕκαστον τῶν μηχανημάτων ὧν προσάγουσιν, ἐγκαλυπτόμενοι καὶ πονηρὸν ἔνδον ἔχοντες συνειδός, τρέμοντες, δεδοικότες, οὕτω περιίασι.
2. Καὶ καθάπερ τὰ δυσθάνατα τῶν θηρίων μετὰ προτέραν καὶ δευτέραν πληγὴν σφοδροτέρως ἐπιπίπτοντα ταῖς αἰχμαῖς τῶν δοράτων, χαλεπωτέραν καθ᾽ ἑαυτῶν ὠθεῖ τὴν πληγήν, τὰ τραύματα εἰς αὐτὰ τὰ σπλάγχνα δεχόμενα · καὶ τὰ κύματα ταῖς πέτραις ῥηγνύμενα, τῇ σφοδροτέρᾳ ῥύμῃ ἑαυτὰ ἀφανίζει καὶ διαλύει · οὕτω δὴ καὶ οὗτοι δι᾽ ὧν ἐπιβουλεύουσιν, ἑαυτοῖς μᾶλλον ἢ ἑτέροις τὰ βάραθρα ἀνορύττουσιν.
3. Οἱ μὲν γὰρ ἐπιβουλευόμενοι τὴν οἰκουμένην, ἐραστὰς ἔχουσιν, ἐπαινέτας, θαυμαστάς, ἀνακηρύττοντας, στεφανοῦντας, τοὺς εἰδότας, τοὺς οὐκ εἰδότας, τοὺς ἀπὸ τῶν πραγμάτων, τοὺς ἀπὸ τῆς φήμης τὰ ἐκείνων μανθάνοντας, τοὺς συναλγοῦντας μυρίους, τοὺς συναγωνιζομένους, τοὺς τὰ χρηστὰ συνευχομένους αὐτοῖς πάντας · οἱ δὲ ἐπιβουλεύοντες τοὺς μισοῦντας τοσούτους καὶ πολλῷ πλείους, τοὺς κατηγόρους, τοῦς διαβάλλοντας, τοὺς ἐλέγχοντας, τοὺς καταισχύνοντας, τοὺς ἐπαρωμένους μυρία, τοὺς ἐπιθυμοῦντας αὐτοὺς ἰδεῖν ἐν κολάσει καὶ τιμωρίᾳ.

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4. Καὶ ταῦτα μὲν ἐνταῦθα · τὰ δὲ ἐκεῖ ποῖος παραστήσει λόγος ; Εἰ γὰρ ἕνα τις σκανδαλίσας τοσαύτῃ κολάσει κατακρίνεται, ὡς συμφέρειν μύλον κρεμασθῆναι ἐπὶ τὸν τράχηλον αὐτοῦ καὶ καταποντισθῆναι εἰς τὴν θάλασσαν · ἐννόησον πόσας δώσουσιν οὗτοι δίκας ἐν τῷ φοβερῷ δικαστηριῷ τότε ἐκείνῳ, πόσας ὑποστήσονται τιμωρίας, τό γε εἰς αὐτοὺς ἥκον, τὴν οἰκουμένην ταράξαντες ἅπασαν, τοσαύτας ἀνατρέψαντες Ἐκκλησίας, τοσαύτῃ πολεμήσαντες εἰρήνῃ, μυρία πανταχοῦ σκάνδαλα θέντες ; 5. Οἱ δὲ παρ' ἐκείνων παθόντες ἅπερ ἔπαθον, μετὰ τῶν μαρτύρων, μετὰ τῶν ἀποστόλων, μετὰ τῶν γενναίων καὶ ὑψηλῶν ἀνδρῶν στήσονται, λάμποντες ἀπὸ τῶν κατορθωμάτων, ἀπὸ τῶν παθῶν, ἀπὸ τῶν στεφάνων, ἀπὸ τῶν βραβείων, ἀπὸ τῆς πολλῆς παρρησίας. 6. Καὶ ὄψονται μὲν αὐτοὺς κολαζομένους, ἐξαρπάσαι δέ, κἂν μυριάκις βουληθῶσι, τῆς κολάσεως οὐ δυνήσονται · ἀλλὰ θήσουσι μὲν ἱκετηρίαν οὗτοι, οὐδὲν δὲ ὀνήσουσιν. Εἰ γὰρ ὁ πένητα ἕνα παραδραμὼν τὸν Λάζαρον τοσαύτην ὑπέμεινε δίκην καὶ οὐδεμιᾶς ἔτυχε παραμυθίας, τί πείσονται οὗτοι, τοσούτους διώξαντες καὶ σκανδαλίσαντες ;

7. Ταῦτ' οὖν ἅπαντα λογιζόμενοι καὶ ὅσα τούτοις ἐοικότα ἀπὸ τῶν θείων συλλέγοντες Γραφῶν, ἑαυτοῖς μὲν τεῖχος ἀσφαλές, τοῖς δὲ ἀσθενεστέροις ἔτι φάρμακα ταῦτα κατασκευάζοντες τὰ διηγήματα, στήκετε ἑδραῖοι καὶ ἀμετακίνητοι, τὰ ὑποκείμενα ὑμῖν ἀγαθὰ ἀναμένοντες. 8. Πάντως γάρ, πάντως κείσεται ὑμῖν ἀμοιβή, οὐ τῶν πόνων ἴση, ἀλλ' ἐκ πολλοῦ τοῦ περιόντος ἄφατος. Τοιοῦτος γὰρ ὁ φιλάνθρωπος θεός · μετὰ πολλῆς τῆς

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φιλοτιμίας τοὺς ἀγαθόν τι ποιεῖν ἢ λέγειν προαιρουμένους ταῖς ἀντιδόσεσι καὶ ταῖς ἀμοιβαῖς νικᾶν ἐσπούδακεν.

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Chapter Twenty Four

Those who have committed these lawless acts receive their punishment in the very actions they have committed.

1. Now these, at any rate, with radiant faces, with the regard of free human beings, possessed of an indescribable confidence, enter into the market place, live in their homes, and freely attend religious services. Those, however, who have committed these deeds come up with various schemes to hide themselves, possessing a bad conscience, trembling, fearful, leading their lives in such a fashion. 2. Just as wild beasts dying a painful death fall upon the points of the spears even more violently after the first or second wound, with each thrust forward suffering an even more grievous injury, the wounds reaching to the entrails themselves, just as waves breaking against the rocks break up and disappear with each violent rush; so these people through their own plotting are digging a pit for themselves rather than for others. 3. For those I have first mentioned, plotted against throughout the world, are beloved, praised, admired, proclaimed, and crowned by those who know them and those who don't, by those who know of them from events, by those who have learned of them through the report of their deeds, by those countless people who share their sufferings, by those who contend along with them, and

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by those who pray for all good things for them. But as for those who continually scheme and plot, so many and even more people hate them, accuse them, reproach them, convict them, dishonor them, curse them with countless imprecations, and long to see them in punishment and retribution. 4. And all these things take place here. But what kind of account should one present of things above? If one who has caused only a single person to stumble is sentenced to such a severe punishment that it would have been better for a millstone to be hung around his neck and cast into the sea, contemplate how great a punishment these will suffer before that fearful tribunal, how great a retribution they will submit to -- those who did everything within their power to trouble the whole world, who overturned so many churches, who warred against so great a peace, who laid countless stumbling blocks everywhere. 5. But those who suffered what they suffered from them will stand in the midst of the martyrs, the apostles, and the noble and lofty men, shining from their virtuous deeds, from their sufferings, from their crowns, from their recompenses, from their great confidence. 6. They will see them punished and will not be able to rescue them from the punishment, though they should so wish ten thousand times. Those being punished will hold out the olive branch of a suppliant, but to no avail. For if the one who rushed by one poor man, Lazarus, endured such a punishment, and obtained no comfort, what will they endure

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who have persecuted so many people and laid so many stumbling blocks in their path? 7. Therefore, reflecting on all these matters and gathering similar things from the Holy Scriptures as a steadfast fortification for yourselves, preparing these statements as remedies for those who are still weak, stand firm and immovable, awaiting the good things which are reserved for you. 8. For by all means, by all means, there is a reward laid up for you, not equal to these sufferings, but indescribably superior. For the God who loves humanity is just like this. With great liberality he has taken much care to surpass with his recompenses and rewards those who deliberately choose to do or speak what is right.

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